



## Official Tournament Rules

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# NMAA TOURNAMENT SYSTEM

## 1.0 – TOURNAMENT OFFICIALS & THEIR DUTIES

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Tournament Officials are an intricate part of the NMAA's leadership.

Tournament Officials are appointed positions and require a desire to serve as well as be a part of a nation-wide team.

This section will outline the leadership positions as well as the proper chain of command when handling adversity.

### 1.1 – Chain of Command

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As in every organization, there is a specific and detailed chain of command that must be followed to achieve consistent success. Any person having a question concerning an aspect of a tournament should adhere to the chain of command listed below to obtain the answer:

- Speak with the judge.
- Ask your instructor.
- Have your instructor speak with the State Tournament Organizer in your state.
- Have your instructor speak with the National Tournament Director.

### 1.2 – National Tournament Director

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The National Tournament Director is the overseer of all aspects of tournaments and is appointed by Master Jody Horn. The National Tournament Director is responsible for maintaining all tournament sanction paperwork, the oversight of tournament judging certification, the preparation for National Championships, the arbitration of disputes, and rule revisions.

The National Tournament Director is the final arbitrator of these rules. Any determination concerning the interpretation, applicability or necessary exceptions to the rules shall be made in the sole discretion of the National Tournament Director.

The current National Tournament Director is **Mrs. Emma Horn — 5th Degree Black Belt**

## 1.3 – State Tournament Organizer

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The Tournament Organizer for each state is appointed by Master Jody Horn in consultation with the National Tournament Director. This leadership position is based upon the National Tournament Director's experience with the individual, the individual's willingness to serve, and the recommendation of the School Owners of the respective state.

The duties of this position vary according to the state in which they are involved. These duties include, but are not limited to:

- Approving the tournament sanction documents for the state.
- Verifying that tournament venues are adequate for a state event.
- Planning and approving the competition schedule for state tournaments.
- Organizing and running state tournaments including arbitration issues that may arise.
- Administering judging certification clinics and tests.
- The State Tournament Organizer will send the original result sheets, ring packets (including competition forms), and the tournament staff sheet to the National Tournament Director within seven business days of the event.
- The State Tournament Organizer will keep the copy of the result sheets for at least two years in case of research needs.
- The State Tournament Organizer will email data files to the National Tournament Director within two business days after the tournament has concluded.

Check with your Instructor as to the name of the Tournament Organizer for your state.

## 1.4 – Assistant State Tournament Organizer

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If needed, State Tournament Organizers may nominate a volunteer to serve as an Assistant State Tournament Organizer or as part of the State Tournament Volunteer Staff.

Two main reasons for this position are:

- The enormous responsibility of running state tournaments.
- To provide a training ground for future Tournament Organizers.

Assistant State Tournament Organizers are appointed by Master Jody Horn in consultation with the National Tournament Director based upon the National Tournament Director's experience with the individual, the individual's willingness to serve, and the recommendation of the School Owners of the respective state. The responsibilities of the assistant are assigned by the State Tournament Organizer. Check with your Instructor as to the names of the Assistant State Tournament Organizers and the Tournament Volunteer Staff members for your state.

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## 1.5 – Tournament Arbitrator

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The position of Tournament Arbitrator is a temporary volunteer assignment during a tournament. It is not a permanent volunteer position. The National Tournament Director or the State Tournament Organizer oversees the event and the arbitrators are under their guidance. During the National Championships, the National Tournament Director may assign State Tournament Organizers to perform the duties of Tournament Arbitrator.

Tournament Arbitrators are responsible for:

- Supervising assigned rings and enforcement of the tournament rules.
- Making “on-the-spot” corrections and may assist in resolving problems in a diplomatic, respectful manner.
- Suggesting to the Tournament Director/Organizer when they feel a judge should be replaced for an appropriate cause.

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## 1.6 – Tournament Secretary

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The Tournament Secretary is appointed by the State Tournament Organizer with consultation from the National Tournament Director.

The Tournament Secretary’s primary focus is to have the control table staffed until all result sheets and congruent registration forms/slips have been received, checked-in, and confirmed for accuracy.

The Tournament Secretary should have a system in place to ensure all completed ring packets are accounted for. In the event any ring packets are missing result sheets, tournament officials shall assume that the fault lies with the Center Judge rather than the Tournament Secretary.

## 2.0 – TOURNAMENT CLASSIFICATIONS

The NMAA and its Affiliates provide a variety of opportunities for members to compete. Currently, there are three classifications of tournaments. As the NMAA grows, competition opportunities will also grow. Here is an overview of the current tournament classifications:

### 2.1 – “Fun” Tournaments

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“Fun” Tournaments are unsanctioned tournaments which are hosted by individual NMAA Affiliates. These tournaments are designed to help students gain knowledge and competition experience as well as judging experience during the tournament year.

To host a “Fun” Tournament, NMAA Affiliates **MUST** have approval from the State Tournament Organizer to ensure there is no conflict of interest with NMAA sanctioned events.

NMAA Affiliates are encouraged to consult with their State Tournament Organizer to learn how to successfully conduct a “Fun” Tournament in their schools.

These events must **NOT** conflict with State Tournaments (in the NMAA Affiliate’s area) or national events.

### 2.2 – State Tournaments

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State Tournaments are hosted around the country by qualifying NMAA Affiliates. Any student of the NMAA may compete at any State Tournament. However, state champion “TOP TEN” points can only be earned by students who live in the state in which the tournament is hosted. See [6.4 – State Champion Program](#).

### 2.3 – National Championships

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The National Championships is hosted by Master Jody Horn and Mrs. Emma Horn in Denver, CO every summer. Every student of the NMAA is welcome to attend and compete at the National Championships. On the days prior to the tournament there are several special events like the “Tournament of Champions” and the NMAA National Rank Testing. This event is also host to many training seminars for school owners, instructors, and students.

The National Championships is the ending of one tournament season and the beginning of the next tournament season.

## 3.0 – RING & VENUE SPECIFICATIONS

Having standards for rings and venues increases the quality and safety of NMAA tournament competition. Some states provide matted rings for their tournaments while other states agree to rent them as needed.

Some venues must be secured at least one year in advance. Securing a venue is one of the first steps to the tournament hosting process.

### 3.1 – Tournament Rings

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Ring dimensions for competition shall be square and should measure in the range of 14 - 18 feet per side, depending on the type of division (adult or junior). For Little Dragon divisions, the previously described rings can be "cut" in half, and two divisions may be run side-by-side.

Each ring should:

- Have clearly marked boundary lines.
- Have centering marks for sparring competition.
- Be numbered.
- Be matted for safety.

### 3.2 – Venue Standards

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State Tournament venues **MUST** be approved by the State Tournament Organizer. These venues must include:

- Adequate floor space for competition.
- Adequate seating for spectators.
- Restrooms large enough for students to use as changing rooms.
- Adequate parking.
- Temperature controlled environment.

For more information on tournament venues, NMAA Affiliates should consult with the State Tournament Organizer of their respective state.

## 4.0 – AWARDS FOR COMPETITION

Competing and winning trophies (or medals) at tournaments is one of the most exciting aspects of martial arts. The NMAA has standards on sizes and quality of awards.

Below are specifics on how competitors are awarded for their efforts.

### 4.1 – Trophies & Medals

There will be three placements awarded in each competition: Traditional Forms, Traditional Weapons, Extreme Forms, and Extreme Weapons. They are as follows:

- 1st Place - Awarded to the competitor with the highest cumulative point total.
- 2nd Place - Awarded to the competitor with the second highest cumulative point total.
- 3rd Place - Awarded to the competitor with the third highest cumulative point total.

Self-Defense, Traditional Point Sparring, and Weapon Sparring competitions will culminate with the following awards given:

- 1st Place - Awarded to the person who wins the final round of competition.
- 2nd Place - Awarded to the person who reaches the final round but is defeated.
- 3rd Place - Awarded to the winner of the 3rd place match which will be held between the two competitors defeated in the semi-final matches.

Tournament hosts may choose to use trophies or medals as their tournament awards. However, tournament hosts **MUST** consult with the State Tournament Organizer of their state as to the size requirements of awards.

**All Little Dragons** will receive a **FIRST-PLACE** award for each event in which they compete. Traditional Forms **and** Traditional Point Sparring / Self-Defense count as **ONE** event. Therefore, Little Dragons will only receive **ONE** Award for forms and sparring. Tournament hosts may choose to have designated awards for Little Dragons. See [11.1 – Little Dragon Division](#).

### 4.2 – Competitor Awards

Competitor Awards are commemorative achievement awards. These will be awarded in the following way:

- **All Juniors and Teens (16 & younger)** will receive **ONE** Competitor Award if they did not place 1st, 2nd, or 3rd in any of the traditional events.
- **Disqualified competitors** are still eligible for a Competitor Award.
- **Extreme competitors** will **NOT** receive Competitor Awards.



## 5.0 – DETERMINING RING ASSIGNMENTS

Division breakdowns are handled by the Tournament Director/Organizer or their assigns. The one standard rule is that divisions will be limited to no more than 16 competitors.

### 5.1 – Combining & Dividing Divisions

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**The following procedure will be followed to determine divisions for state tournaments:**

- The competitors will be called to the “staging area” or a specific ring. This area is usually separate from the main competition floor.
- The divisions will be made according to the number of competitors in each of the age and rank groups.
- If there are more than 16 competitors, the group will be divided by height.
- There are other scenarios in which the State Tournament Organizer will divide or combine a group. In such scenarios, the primary focus is that competition is safe, fair, and fun.
- NO ONE (Competitors, Parents, Senior Instructors, or Spectators) will attempt to influence the Tournament Director/Organizer (or their assigns) in the forming of divisions.

### 5.2 – Process for Handling Late Entries

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The rules governing late competitors are as follows:

- If Traditional Forms competition has started but has not been closed, the competitor will be allowed to compete in Traditional Forms. The late competitor will perform next, even if everyone has not performed.
- Traditional Forms competition is considered closed when one of the following events have occurred:
  - ✓ When the tiebreaker(s) have begun (if there are ties).
  - ✓ When the first weapons competitor has been called up to compete.
- If Traditional Forms competition has been closed and Traditional Weapons competition has started, the competitor will not be allowed to compete in the forms event but can be added to Traditional Weapons. If Traditional Weapons competition has already begun, the inserted competitor will perform next, even if everyone has not performed.
- Traditional Weapons competition is considered closed when one of the following events have occurred:

- ✓ When the tiebreaker(s) have begun (if there are ties).
- ✓ When the first Traditional Point Sparring / Self-Defense match has begun.
- If the Traditional Weapons competition has been closed, the competitor will not be allowed to compete in the Traditional Forms or Traditional Weapons events, but may compete in Traditional Point Sparring / Self-Defense, and Weapon Sparring.
- If the SECOND round of Traditional Point Sparring / Self-Defense competition has started, the competitor will not be allowed to compete because a late entry would disrupt the bye system, but the competitor may compete in Weapon Sparring.
- If the SECOND round of Weapon Sparring has started, the competitor will not be admitted to the ring. At that time, the State Tournament Organizer will determine if there is another ring available. At national events, that decision will be made by the National Tournament Director or their assigns.

If it is the opinion of the Tournament Director/Organizer that the student has purposefully arrived late in order to receive an advantageous position, the tournament official may refuse entry into any competition.

For the sake of competition, the Tournament Director/Organizer will make every effort to see that junior competitors have an opportunity to compete. If the junior's ring has concluded, the tournament official may decide to create another ring for the purpose of awarding trophies. These rings will not award points in the State or National Champion "TOP TEN" standings.

If it's determined that the junior competitor was at fault for missing their ring (for example: they were not paying attention when their ring was called), the Tournament Director/Organizer may choose to forgo the courtesy of creating another ring and deny the competitor the opportunity to compete.

## 6.0 – CHAMPION PROGRAMS

Becoming a Champion in Taekwondo is one of the most difficult challenges students face. It is also one of the most rewarding challenges. The NMAA has designed a champion process that culminates at the end of every tournament season.

Currently, there are two titles that can be earned by competitors in the NMAA: State Champion and National Champion.

### 6.1 – Tournament Year

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The tournament year ends and begins at the National Championships; one tournament year ends with the "Tournament of Champions," and another begins with the National Championship Tournament on Saturday. The regulation 2019-2020 Tournament Season will end on Sunday, May 31, 2020. NMAA Affiliates may NOT host a sanctioned State Tournament after May 31, 2020. The black belt divisions will conclude at the "Tournament of Champions" in July of 2020.

### 6.2 – Proper Division Placement

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It is crucial to understand which division a student should be placed in for the Tournament Season. The proper division is based on the **competition age, rank, and gender** of the student.

#### 6.2.1 – Competitor's Age

See [7.3 – Competition Age](#).

#### 6.2.2 – Rank Information

The criteria for Color Belts and Black Belts differ. Therefore, it is important to check rank information provided by State and National Championship Programs to understand the best placement for each competitor. See [6.5 – State Championships \(State Finals\)](#). See [6.8 – Qualifying for the "Tournament of Champions"](#).

## 6.3 – Point Tracking System

All champion programs will use the same point structure for awarding points. Points are awarded based on the tournament's classification and the competitor's placement in the event. The competitor must be in good standing with the NMAA and meet the eligibility requirements for the program. See [7.0 – ELIGIBILITY TO COMPETE](#).

Participants at State Tournaments will be awarded FULL points regardless of how many competitors are in their ring. This system will also be used for the National Championship Tournament. Combining rings is a delicate subject as some competitors do not want their ring combined with any other ring(s). Therefore, when needed, it's imperative that the Tournament Director/Organizer consistently follow the set procedure for combining rings as outlined by the National Tournament Director. If, after following the procedure for combining rings, the Tournament Director/Organizer is left with a division with less than five (5) competitors, full points will still be awarded.

Black Belts vying for National Champion may accumulate points from any NMAA State Tournament nationwide. However, competitors may only count their best five results in each event. If a Black Belt has competed at five State Tournaments, they may continue to compete at State Tournaments in attempt to replace points in events in which they have not earned first-place.

The maximum number of points attainable in one tournament season is currently 35; this includes:

- National Championships - max of 10 points.
- Best five (5) State Tournaments - max 25 points.

### 6.3.1 – State Tournament Points

State Tournaments that have been approved by the State Tournament Organizer and sanctioned by the NMAA will award points for State and National "TOP TEN" rankings for eligible students.

The points awarded for a state tournament are as follows:

#### **For all divisions**

|           |          |
|-----------|----------|
| 1st place | 5 points |
| 2nd place | 3 points |
| 3rd place | 1 point  |

#### **NOTE:**

Only states with three or more NMAA schools may award points towards State "TOP TEN." See [6.5 – State Championships \(State Finals\)](#). However, **all** states may award points towards National "TOP TEN" (black belts only).

## 6.3.2 – National Championship Tournament Points

There is only one National Championship each year and it's hosted by the NMAA (Master Jody Horn and Mrs. Emma Horn). Due to the size of this event and the increased level of competition, the amount of points awarded at Nationals is doubled.

The points awarded for the National Championship Tournament are as follows:

### For all divisions

|           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1st place | 10 points |
| 2nd place | 6 points  |
| 3rd place | 2 points  |

## 6.3.3 – “TOP TEN” Standings

During the tournament season, the NMAA Tournament Department will collect the results of all sanctioned tournaments. The eligible students who placed will receive “TOP TEN” points according to their placing. These points are awarded in Traditional Forms, Traditional Point Sparring, Traditional Weapons, Weapon Sparring, Extreme Forms, and Extreme Weapons competitions. These points are totaled at the end of the tournament year, and the ten competitors in each division with the most points will earn a spot on the final “TOP TEN” list.

Sanctioned tournaments will follow all the NMAA’s Official Tournament Rules including the current guidelines for separating and combining age and rank groups and for distributing awards. Competitors may only earn points by placing at tournaments sanctioned by the NMAA.

STATE AND NATIONAL POINT CORRECTIONS: Tournament points are normally updated within three weeks of a sanctioned NMAA tournament. Each competitor is responsible for confirming (“double checking”) that their points are correct. Point corrections or inquiries must be emailed to the **National Tournament Director – Mrs. Emma Horn** at **Emma@NMAAlliance.com** within 30 days from the date the tournament results are distributed. Email provides an adequate “paper trail” which is essential in making sure all competitor concerns are fairly and timely addressed. After 30 days of a tournament being posted, no additional correction requests can be made.

\*It may take longer than 30 days to resolve a request. Therefore, your patience is appreciated!

## 6.4 – State Champion Program

For a competitor to receive points they must compete in a Competitive Division AND earn 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place.

**State Champion points are only awarded to competitors competing in their home-state.**

Little Dragons and Juniors in the Regular Division are **ineligible** to accumulate points towards a State Champion title.

At this moment, black belt adults are **ineligible** to participate in the State Champion Program.

- As the NMAA grows, expanding the State Champion Program to the adult black belt divisions will be considered. The decision to add adult black belt divisions to the State Champion Program will be made by Master Jody Horn with the consultation of the National Tournament Director.

**Color Belt Divisions:** Because color belts change rank frequently during a tournament year, divisions cannot be based on rank. Divisions for color belts are currently based on age only. For the Junior divisions, boys and girls will be combined and compete in the same ring. The Teen and Adult divisions will be separated by gender. See 11.0 – TOURNAMENT DIVISIONS.

**Promoting to Black Belt during the tournament season:** Students who test for First-Degree Black Belt **BEFORE** the last scheduled State Tournament in their respective state will forfeit all points earned in the Color Belt division.

If Color Belts wish to compete at the "State Finals" in the Color Belt division, they can **NOT** test for the rank of First-Degree Black Belt until **AFTER** the last scheduled State Tournament of their respective state.

### 6.4.1 – "Competing Up"

To be allowed to "compete up," a student **MUST** receive permission from their instructor, the State Tournament Organizer, the National Tournament Director, and NMAA Head Quarters.

Low brown belt (and higher) students may choose to compete in the Black Belt division during the regulation tournament season; this is called "competing up." Students who "compete up" will immediately begin accumulating points in the Black Belt division at both the State and National level.

Restrictions and allowances to "competing up" are as follows:

- Color Belts who decide to "compete up" **MUST** compete in the Black Belt division (in ALL events) for the rest of the tournament season.
- Color Belts may **NOT** compete in Traditional Weapons competition in the Black Belt division. "Free-style" weapon forms are not allowed in the Black Belt division and Color Belts are not allowed to learn or compete with the Black Belt weapon forms.
- Color Belts may **NOT** compete in Weapon Sparring competition in the Black Belt division. Black Belts weapon spar with a sparring sword. Color Belts are not allowed to spar with sparring swords. Sparring escrimas are not allowed in the Black Belt division.

- Color Belts **MUST** compete with their whole form in Traditional Forms. Color Belts may compete with whichever form is approved by their instructor (Shimsan 1-6) during the regulation tournament season.
- Color Belts who are "competing up" **MAY** compete in both Extreme events. Color Belts who are "competing up" **MAY** compete in Extreme Weapons without competing in Traditional Weapons. To compete in Extreme Forms, Color Belts must also compete in Traditional Forms.

**Beware:** Those competing in the Black Belt division at "State Finals" or the "Tournament of Champions" **MUST** hold the rank of Red/Black belt (or higher) AND may **NOT** compete with color belt forms lower than Shimsan 6.

## 6.5 – State Championships (State Finals)

The State Finals are held after the last regulation State Tournament of the tournament season for each qualifying state. **To qualify for a State Championship, states must have at least THREE active NMAA schools located in their respective area.**

"TOP TEN" point holders must be actively training in an NMAA school to compete at the State Championships or the National "Tournament of Champions." See 7.0 – ELIGIBILITY TO COMPETE.

After all qualifying competitors are announced, the tournament will be run in the following way:

- The competitor order for Traditional Forms, Traditional Weapons, Extreme Forms, and Extreme Weapons will be as follows:
  1. The "TOP TEN" point holders will be "seeded" and will perform in reverse order of their ranking (starting with the competitor ranked tenth).
  2. If two or more competitors are tied in points, they will be seeded using an RNG (Random Number Generator).
- During Traditional Forms competition, Color Belts must perform a color belt form. Black Belts must perform a black belt form (or Shimsan 6). See 17.4.3 – "6-Month Rule".
- The placement of the competitors in the bracket for Traditional Point Sparring and Weapon Sparring will be as follows:
- **Awarding of Byes:** Previous State or National title holders will NOT receive favor at the "State Finals." All competitors must accumulate State Champion "TOP TEN" points to secure a seed in the State Championships.
  1. If byes are available, they will be awarded to competitors based upon their ranking on the "TOP TEN" list (starting with the competitor ranked in first).
  2. All other competitors will be "seeded" in their respective positions.
  3. If two or more competitors are tied in points, they will be seeded using an RNG (Random Number Generator).

4. Once the sparring brackets are drawn, they will not be redrawn for "no-show" competitors. The "no-show" will forfeit the match, and the listed opponent will advance to the next round.
- After the State Champion "TOP TEN" standings are announced, if one or more of the competitors are unable to compete in the State Finals (for whatever reason), those empty slots will not be filled. See Example #1 below.
  - "TOP TEN" points are **not awarded** for placing in the State Championship Finals.

**Example #1:** James earned the tenth position in the Men's Color Belt 17+ division. Due to his work obligations, he is unable to compete for the title of State Champion. Sam, who is ranked eleventh, will NOT move up to the tenth position because he did not earn the tenth position.

## 6.6 – "State Finals" Awards

Typically, competitors who do not place first, second, or third place will not receive an award at the "State Finals." For each division, there will be one State Champion award, one award for second place, and one award for third place in each competitive event.

The winners of each event in the "State Finals" will be recognized as the NEW State Champions in their divisions and can order/purchase a special lettered uniform through their instructor indicating "State Champion" in [event(s) won].

**Personal or private alteration of the "title" or the "year" of the title on uniforms is NOT allowed.** See [9.1 – Traditional Taekwondo Uniform](#).

### 6.6.1 – State Champion Privileges

- **State Champions will only have these privileges for the tournament season immediately following the season in which they won the State title.**
- **State Champion privileges are valid ONLY at State Tournaments from which the student won their title.** If the current State Champion of one state travels to another state to compete in a State Tournament, the visiting champ will not receive privileges or preference.
- State Champions who earned a title in Traditional Forms, Traditional Weapons, Extreme Forms, or Extreme Weapons will be privileged with performing their respective form last at State Tournaments (in the event they earned the title) for the ensuing tournament year.
  - ✓ The current State Champion of that division (and event) will have precedence over current State Champions who have "moved up" into the division. The division State Champ will perform last. The State Champ who "moved up" will perform second to last.
  - ✓ The privilege of the current National Champion supersedes the corresponding State Champion privilege in "form" related events. Therefore, if the current National Champion is present, they will perform last and the current State Champion will perform second to last.



- ✓ Competitors **MUST** be wearing an official NMAA Champion Uniform top in order to qualify for this privilege.
- State Champions who earned a title in Traditional Sparring or Weapon Sparring will gain precedence in the distribution of byes at State and National Tournaments (only in the event they earned the title).
  - ✓ If a bye is available, the most current National Champion will automatically win the bye.
  - ✓ If there is more than one bye available, previous National Champions will receive the byes in descending order by year. If there are two champions that have titles earned in the same year and only one bye to choose from, one name will be drawn at random.
  - ✓ If there are no National Champions in the ring or if there are more byes to give, the current State Champion will receive the bye. If there are two State Champions from the same year, the current State Champion of the division will get precedence for the bye.

**Example:** The Teen State Champion in Weapon Sparring moved up to the Adult division. If the Adult State Champion in Weapon Sparring is present, the Adult State Champion will receive the bye.
- ✓ Competitors **MUST** be wearing an official NMAA Champion Uniform top in order to earn a bye in this manner.

## 6.7 – National Champion Program

Only black belt students who are members in good standing are eligible to earn National Champion "TOP TEN" points with one exception; Students who have received the rank of Low Brown Belt **MAY** decide to "compete up" and subsequently, earn National Champion "TOP TEN" points during the regulation tournament season. See [6.4.1 – "Competing Up"](#).

- **Beware:** A Color Belt who has decided to "compete up" **MUST** hold the rank of Red/Black belt or higher to compete in the "Tournament of Champions."
- A Red/Black Belt **MUST** compete in the "Tournament of Champions" with Shimsan 6. They **MUST** demonstrate the whole form. See [11.3 – Black Belt Division](#).
- Those competing for a national title in Black Belt divisions **MUST** compete with a whole form in the "Tournament of Champions." Competing with half of a form is not permitted in "TOP TEN" competition. See [17.4.3 – "6-Month Rule"](#).

**Example #1:** Students who have held the rank of First-Degree Black Belt **for at least** 6 months must perform the entire first-degree black belt form to compete for the title of National Champion in Traditional Forms.

**Example #2:** If a First-Degree Black Belt tests for Second-Degree Black Belt one month before Nationals, they must perform either the entire first-degree form or the entire second-degree form at the "Tournament of Champions."

The age divisions for the National Champion Program follow the current black belt divisions. See [11.0 – TOURNAMENT DIVISIONS](#).

**Promoting to Black Belt during the tournament season:** Students cannot accumulate points in the color belt division after receiving the rank of First-Degree Black Belt.

Points earned in the Color Belt division can NOT be transferred to the Black Belt division.

## 6.8 – Qualifying for the “Tournament of Champions”

The tournament year culminates with the crowning of the NMAA’s National Champions. Qualified competitors will compete in the “Tournament of Champions” (TOC) which will be held at the National Championships at the end of the tournament season.

**To qualify for the “Tournament of Champions,” a competitor must meet one of the following requirements:**

- Earn a spot on the Final National Champion “TOP TEN” standings by earning points throughout the current tournament season.
- Be the current National Champion of that division in that event. See [6.10 – “Tournament of Champions” Awards](#).
- Be a current National Champion in that event from a division they have recently moved out of. See [6.10 – “Tournament of Champions” Awards](#).

Qualifiers **MUST** register to compete in the TOC. Registration will be online only. School Owners will be notified as soon as the online registration is live. Onsite registration MIGHT be allowed but is not guaranteed. All registration fees are the responsibility of the competitor.

“TOP TEN” point holders must be actively training in an NMAA school to compete at the State Championships or the National “Tournament of Champions.” See [7.0 – ELIGIBILITY TO COMPETE](#).

There could be more competitors vying for the title of National Champion than listed on the published Final “TOP TEN” standings. All potential “add-ins” will be taken under careful consideration and added by Master Jody Horn and the National Tournament Director.

## 6.9 – “Tournament of Champions” (TOC)

The TOC ends the tournament year and is a highlight of the National Championships. After all qualifying competitors are announced, the tournament will commence the following way:

- The competitor order for Traditional Forms, Traditional Weapons, Extreme Forms, and Extreme Weapons will be as follows:
  1. The “TOP TEN” point holders will be “seeded” and will perform in reverse order of their ranking (starting with the competitor ranked tenth).
  2. If two of more competitors are tied in points, they will be seeded using an RNG (Random Number Generator).
  3. If the CURRENT National Champion of that division, in that event, is eligible and wishes to defend their title, they will perform LAST. See [6.10 – “Tournament of Champions” Awards](#).
- During Traditional Forms competition, competitors **MUST** perform the form designated for their rank for the division in which they are competing. See [6.7 – National Champion Program](#).
- The placement of the competitors in the bracket for Traditional Point Sparring and Weapon Sparring will be as follows:
  1. **Awarding of Byes:** If the CURRENT National Champion of that division, in that event, is eligible and wishes to defend their title, the Champ will be “seeded” in the FIRST position and receive the first bye (if any are available). If additional byes are available, they will be awarded to competitors based upon their ranking on the “TOP TEN” list (starting with the competitor ranked in first).
  2. If the current National Champion is not present or is not eligible to defend their title, the top ranked competitor will be “seeded” in the first position.
  3. All other competitors will be “seeded” in their respective positions.
  4. If two of more competitors are tied in points, they will be seeded using an RNG (Random Number Generator).
  5. Previous National or State Champions (other than the current National Champion) in the respective sparring events will not have any bearing on the determining of byes.
  6. Once the sparring brackets are drawn, they will not be redrawn for “no-show” competitors. The “no-show” will forfeit the match, and the listed opponent will advance to the next round.
- After the National Champion “TOP TEN” standings are announced, if one or more of the competitors are unable to compete in the TOC (for whatever reason), those empty slots will not be filled.
- “TOP TEN” points are **not awarded** for placing in the TOC.

**Example #1:** James earned the tenth position in the Men’s Black Belt 17+ division. Due to his work obligations, he is unable to compete for the title of National Champion. Sam, who is ranked eleventh, will NOT move up to the tenth position because he did not earn the tenth position.

## 6.10 – “Tournament of Champions” Awards

Certificates and special awards are given to all the “Tournament of Champion” competitors. For each division and each event, there will be one National Champion award, one award for second place, and one award for third place in each competitive event.

The winners of each event in the “Tournament of Champions” will be recognized as the NEW National Champions in their divisions and can order/purchase a special lettered uniform through their instructor indicating “National Champion” in [event(s) won].

**Personal or private alteration of the “title” or the “year” of the title on uniforms is NOT allowed.** See [9.1 – Traditional Taekwondo Uniform](#).

### 6.10.1 – National Champion Privileges

Winning the title of National Champion is an amazing accomplishment. In effort to acknowledge the hard work and dedication invested in earning a National title, National Champs “crowned” at the “Tournament of Champions” (TOC) will receive a few special “privileges” for the upcoming tournament season.

- National Champions will be granted an automatic TOP “SEED” placement in the TOC at the end of the ensuing tournament season.

The following conditions apply:

- ✓ Only applies to the event(s) in which the competitor won the title of National Champion.
- ✓ Only applies if the competitor remains in the EXACT division and age group for the ensuing tournament season.
- National Champions who “age out of” or “rank out of” the division in which they won the title of National Champion WILL RECEIVE an automatic invitation to compete in the TOC of their new division at the end of the ensuing tournament season.

This invitation will grant the National Champion the last seeded position in the TOC unless they have a current ranking in the new division.

The following conditions apply:

- ✓ Applies only to the event(s) in which the competitor won the title of National Champion.
- ✓ This invitation is valid for the TOC of the ensuing tournament season only.
- National Champions are deemed **ineligible** to “defend” their National title if they:
  - ✓ Choose not to compete in next year’s TOC.
  - ✓ Move to a different division.
  - ✓ Are not in good standing with the NMAA. See [7.0 – ELIGIBILITY TO COMPETE](#).

- National Champions who earned a title in Traditional Forms, Traditional Weapons, Extreme Forms, or Extreme Weapons will be privileged with performing their respective form last at State and National Tournaments (only in the event they earned the title) for the ensuing tournament year.
  - ✓ The current National Champion of that division (and event) will have precedence over National Champions who have “moved up” into the division. The division National Champ will perform last. The National Champ who “moved up” will perform second to last.
  - ✓ This National Champion privilege supersedes the corresponding State Champion privilege in “form” related events.
  - ✓ Competitors **MUST** be wearing an official NMAA Champion Uniform top in order to qualify for this privilege.
  - ✓ **National Champions (in form events) will only have this privilege for the tournament season immediately following the season in which they won the National title.**
- National Champions who earned a title in Traditional Sparring or Weapon Sparring will gain precedence in the distribution of byes at future State and National Tournaments (only in the event they earned the title).
  - ✓ If a bye is available, the most current National Champion (of that division) will automatically win the bye.
  - ✓ If there is more than one bye available, previous National Champions will receive the byes in descending order by year. If there are two champions (other than the current champ of the division) that have titles earned in the same year and only one bye to choose from, one name will be drawn at random.
  - ✓ Competitors **MUST** be wearing an official NMAA Champion Uniform top in order to earn a bye in this manner.

# COMPETITORS

## 7.0 – ELIGIBILITY TO COMPETE

All NMAA students who wish to compete at sanctioned NMAA tournaments must follow proper protocols to gain eligibility. This section will detail the requirements and restrictions of the eligibility process.

### 7.1 – NMAA Requirements

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#### ***THIS APPLIES TO ALL STUDENTS REGARDLESS OF RANK***

To compete in any sanctioned NMAA event, competitors must comply with the following requirements:

1. Must be a member in good standing with the NMAA. 'In good standing' means that any member, regardless of rank or instructor collar, must be clear of disciplinary action levied by the organization and free from legal or other circumstances that might deem the member "unfit" to compete.
2. Must be a member and train regularly at an NMAA affiliated school.
3. Must have their instructor's permission to attend and compete.

Failure to comply with any of the three requirements listed above will result in the competitor being denied the opportunity to compete, or if discovered after the completion of the event, any points or place winnings will be nullified. The eligibility requirement applies to all competition divisions including Traditional Forms, Self-Defense, Traditional Point Sparring, Traditional Weapons, Weapon Sparring, Extreme Forms, and Extreme Weapons competitions. This rule will apply to all future competition divisions as well.

### 7.2 – Competition Rank

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Students are considered to have earned their rank when **either** of the following criteria has been met:

- Rank testing is submitted and processed by the NMAA Testing Department.
- Students receive their new rank belt from their instructor.

#### 7.2.1 – Color Belt Competitors

Color belt competitors must wear the proper belt and compete in the division for the rank they currently hold regardless of how long they've held that rank. Students should take pride in what they have earned

and be honored to wear the correct belt. Students who have been awarded a rank at their school should wear that belt even if their instructor has not yet “officially” sent the results to the NMAA Testing Department.

**Exception:** New Camo Belts who are not comfortable with Traditional Point Sparring may choose to compete in the Beginner division and compete as a yellow belt. If so, they must wear their yellow belt to the tournament. This option is appropriate if the student tested for camo belt within two weeks of the tournament. Please consult with your instructor.

**Notes:**

- Students holding the rank of Low Brown Belt may compete in EITHER the color belt division OR the black belt division. See [6.7 – National Champion Program](#).
- Red/Black belts should be aware of their test date for First-Degree Black Belt. See [6.4 – State Champion Program](#).

## 7.3 – Competition Age

Students will compete, the entire tournament season, in the division determined by what their age will be as of 11:59 p.m. on December 31st (of the current tournament season).

### 7.3.1 – “12-Year-Old Rule”

Due to vast differences in maturity, 12-year-old competitors may compete in the Junior Division (11 years old and younger) with special permission.

The decision to move a student to the Junior division should be made by the student’s instructor along with the State Tournament Organizer. The State Tournament Organizer has the final say regarding whether a student qualifies for the “12-Year-Old Rule.”

### 7.3.2 – “12-Year-Old Rule”: Point of Concern

The decision to move a 12-year-old to the Junior Division should be made at the beginning of the tournament season (or prior to the student’s first tournament in which they compete).

Points earned in one division CANNOT be transferred to another division. If rules concerning “TOP TEN” points are not completely clear, please consult with your instructor.

**Example:** Points earned while competing in the Junior division cannot be transferred to the Teen division if it is decided that the student qualifies for the “12-Year-Old Rule” in mid-season.

## 7.4 – Tournament Registration

**For State Tournaments**, all competitors are encouraged to pre-register with their instructor.

The following guidelines apply to all registrations and registration forms:

- It is the responsibility of the competitors to obtain a registration form from their school owner. School owners should guide their students in filling out the registration form fully and completely. This includes but is not limited to their Name, Date of Birth, Gender, Age, Rank, School Location, and the Name of their instructor.
- If students are competing at a tournament that their instructor cannot attend, they may register at the event with their instructor's permission.

To better prepare for the **National Championships**, all competitors, regardless of rank, are asked to pre-register online. Competitors should ask their instructor how to register online for Nationals.

### 7.4.1 – Registration Fees

All competitors **MUST** compete in Traditional Forms & Sparring. Other events may be added but may not replace these foundational events (Traditional Forms & Sparring). Therefore, Traditional Forms and Traditional Sparring are registered together at State and National tournaments.

If a competitor is not medically able to compete in either Traditional Forms or Traditional Sparring, they must provide a doctor's note to their instructor as well as the State Tournament Organizer.

Failure to compete in both Traditional Forms and Traditional Sparring MAY result in a loss of "TOP TEN" points.

NMAA State Tournament registration fees for the 2019-2020 season are as follows:

#### **State Tournaments**

- \$45 for Traditional Forms / Sparring.
- +\$25 for Traditional Weapons.
- +\$25 for Weapon Sparring.
- +\$25 for Extreme Forms.
- +\$25 for Extreme Weapons.
- 3<sup>rd</sup>+ family member will pay \$15 per event.
- Qualified judges will receive a discount on their registration fees. Speak to your school owner for more details on registration fees for judges.

#### **National Championships, "State Finals," & "Tournament of Champions"**

- Registration fees, event schedules, and competition information for these special events are published and released by NMAA Head Quarters towards the end of each tournament season.



## 7.5 – Arrival & Competition Times

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It is recommended that each participant arrives before opening ceremonies in time to be on the main floor to line up and bow-in before the competition. However, many states and all national events now post the approximate competition times for each division. In those instances, color belt competitors should arrive at the tournament site approximately 30 to 45 minutes before their posted competition time unless otherwise noted in the tournament information packets.

**The Center Judge will allow a late competitor to enter the division if the Tournament Director/Organizer approves the entry.** In which case, the Tournament Director/Organizer will be called to the ring to oversee the proper insertion of the competitor into the competition ring. See [5.2 – Process for Handling Late Entries](#).

## 7.6 – Competitor's Attitude

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One of the most important tenants of Taekwondo is the concept of DISCIPLINE. While it is important to show the discipline of being a good loser, it is equally important to exhibit the discipline of being a good winner. Taekwondo students are known for their discipline, courtesy, and respect. Any exhibition of disgust, frustration, or dissatisfaction with the outcome of competition will not be tolerated. This includes leaving the ring any time before the competitors are formally dismissed. Additionally, over-exuberance with winning ("celebrating") will not be allowed.

## 8.0 – BLACK BELT CODE OF CONDUCT

Black Belts are the pillars of our organization. Therefore, it is imperative that all Black Belts, young and old, contribute to the growth of future generations through acts of service, leadership, and “living example.” This section does NOT detail the entire code of conduct for Black Belts, but it does address protocols and expectations for Black Belts as they pertain to NMAA Tournaments.

### 8.1 – Becoming a Tournament Judge

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It is the duty of all eligible black belts, regardless of rank or position, to earn appropriate judging credentials and volunteer to judge at any NMAA event they are attending. This rule applies to every black belt in attendance. See [14.5 – Obtaining Judging Credentials](#).

All black belts shall arrive before the judge’s meeting held at every tournament event, attend the meeting, and remain at the tournament until the final “Bow-out” has been completed unless they receive permission from the Tournament Director/Organizer and the Senior Rank in attendance. It is the duty of all senior instructors to ensure that their junior instructors and black belts comply with this rule.

### 8.2 – Attending the Judges’ Meeting

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The State Tournament Organizer or the Assistant State Tournament Organizer will conduct a black belt judges’ meeting prior to every state tournament.

The purpose of such meeting is to:

- Address judging concerns and any rule clarifications.
- Make special announcements concerning the tournament.
- Make judging assignments.
- Organize the black belt competition.
- Remind judges of the safety compliance rules.

## 8.3 – Tournament Interference

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Senior instructors shall refrain from interfering in the competition. If there is a problem in a ring, seniors should notify the Tournament Director/Organizer and take no further action unless otherwise instructed.

## 8.4 – Disciplinary Action

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If a Black Belt does not follow proper protocol at a tournament, the following steps will be taken:

- For the first infraction, the Tournament Director/Organizer will speak to the Black Belt involved, discuss the proper expectations, and notify the Black Belt's instructor.
- Any further occurrences will be handled by Master Jody Horn and the National Tournament Director.  
Possible consequences include but are not limited to the following:
  - ✓ The Black Belt is denied the opportunity to compete at the tournament in question.
  - ✓ The Black Belt is forced to forfeit any "TOP TEN" points earned at the tournament in question.

## 9.0 – UNIFORM GUIDELINES & DRESS CODE

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Uniform guidelines and the dress code should be strictly followed by all members of the NMAA. All competitors are reminded that they not only represent their school and family, but they also represent Master Horn and the NMAA.

### 9.1 – Traditional Taekwondo Uniform

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The traditional uniform has a standard look, but some elements can be customized. An official uniform **MUST** contain the following:

- It must be a cross-over style top with bottoms (pants) that match in fabric weight.
- It must be in good repair (no holes or frayed edges).
- It must have an official NMAA patch sewn on the right chest.

Once the uniform matches these standards, you **MAY** also include:

- A school patch sewn on the left chest.
- Uniform Lettering.
  - ✓ If the uniform is lettered, the lettering on the back of the uniform top must follow NMAA standards.
  - ✓ All State and National Champion uniforms must be ordered through the NMAA to ensure validity.

***Personal or private alteration of the "title" or the "year" of the title on uniforms is NOT allowed.***

- 4th Degree Black Belts or higher will wear a 1" black stripe down the side of each pant leg (or white stripe on black pants).
- Undershirts are permitted for any member (male or female) but must match the color of the uniform top.
- Females are required to wear a garment under their uniform top (bra, sports bra, undershirt, etc.). If the garment is visible above the "V" cross-over, it must match the color of the uniform top.
- Leadership/Instructor Collars.
  - ✓ Junior instructors, ages 12 years and younger, will wear a red/white/red, blue/white/blue, or red/white/blue collar.
  - ✓ Blue stars (round patches) used to measure accomplishments set within your school can be utilized in lieu of a collar.
  - ✓ Instructors, ages 13 years and older, will wear a red, blue, or black collar.

An official uniform **MAY NOT** have the following:

- A V-neck pullover top.
- Manufacturer Tags: All tags must be removed from the uniform top, the uniform bottoms, and the belt.
- Stripes, patches, pockets, or anything else not listed above.

**NMAA Affiliates (school owners) are responsible for ensuring that their students comply with these uniform requirements.**

A traditional uniform IS REQUIRED to be worn by all competitors during Traditional Forms, Traditional Weapon Forms, Traditional Point Sparring / Self-Defense, and Weapon Sparring competitions at NMAA sanctioned tournaments.

### 9.1.1 – Uniform Color Options

#### Color Belts

Full White uniform only (may be a light weight or heavy weight).

#### First-Degree Black Belts

White top with Black pants or full White uniform (a heavy weight uniform is recommended for black belts).

#### Second-Degree Black Belts

Any combination of Black and White (a heavy weight uniform is recommended for black belts).

#### Third-Degree Black Belts (and higher)

Any combination of Blue, Red, Black, or White (a heavy weight uniform is recommended for black belts).

### 9.1.2 – Belts & Markings

Little Dragon belts are only permitted to have the following colors and markings:

- Two-toned belts: white/orange, orange/yellow, yellow/camo, camo/green, green/purple, and purple/blue, blue/brown, brown/red.
- Traditional color belts: white, orange, yellow, camo, green, purple, blue, brown, and red.
- “Knowledge Stripes” are permitted for Little Dragon belts.
- Little Dragon belts MAY include either a black or gold stripe throughout the length of the belt (solid color belts only).

Color belts are only permitted to have the following colors and markings:

- Traditional color belts: white, orange, yellow, camo, green, purple, blue, brown, red, and red/black.
- “Knowledge Stripes” are permitted for color belts.
- Color belts MAY include either a black or gold stripe throughout the length of the belt.

- NO other belt colors, combinations, or stripe colors are allowed.

Black Belts are only permitted to have the following colors and markings:

- Black Belts MUST have a rank indicator. Rank indicators MUST be either the rank bar, Roman numeral, or star as used by the NMAA.
- The student's name and rank MUST both be on the same end of the belt (left end when worn).
- Black Belts MAY have knowledge or midterm stars which are approved by the NMAA.
- Black Belts may have different colored thread based on their rank. See list below:
  - ✓ First-Degree: Gold thread.
  - ✓ Second-Degree: Red or Gold thread.
  - ✓ Third-Degree: Blue, Red, or Gold thread.
  - ✓ Fourth-Degree and higher: Silver, Blue, Red, or Gold thread.

### 9.1.3 – Sword Pants

Tang Bagee ("hakama") **all black** pants may only be worn when competing with the Gumdo (Korean sword). The judges will not delay the ring for a competitor to put on Tang Bagee pants.

Sword pants are optional for Black Belts competing with the sword.

## 9.2 – NMAA Extreme Uniform

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Those competing in the NMAA Extreme events may wear a traditional uniform OR an official NMAA Extreme uniform. The NMAA Extreme uniform may ONLY be worn to compete in NMAA Extreme events; it may not be worn for traditional Taekwondo events.

## 9.3 – NMAA Ambassador Uniform

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The NMAA Ambassador Uniform may NOT be worn as an official uniform at NMAA sanctioned tournaments. However, at the school owner's discretion, students may wear the NMAA Ambassador Uniform to "Fun" Tournaments.

## 9.4 – Dress Code for Students & Instructors

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Before and after their competition, Color Belts may wear regular “street” clothes, bearing in mind appropriate styles for the occasion. It’s recommended and appreciated that Color Belts who can assist with tournament duties (Scorekeeper and Form Leader) remain in their uniform.

Black Belts are held to a higher standard due to their position in the organization and as role models for color belt students. Black Belts in attendance (whether competing or not) should arrive wearing “dress” clothes. Females may arrive in “dress” slacks (or a skirt) and a top, or a dress. Males may arrive to the event wearing “dress” slacks, a collared shirt with a tie, and a sports coat / blazer (adding a sweater vest is optional). Males may also arrive wearing a full suit.

Black belt junior boys may wear slacks and a polo shirt (or a button up shirt). Black belt junior girls may wear a dress. Please consult your instructor if you have questions concerning the appropriate attire.

**Black belts MUST arrive and depart NMAA events in “dress” clothes as described above.** This dress code is in effect from their first appearance at the event until they have left the event site. After arrival, black belts are expected to change into a proper NMAA uniform unless otherwise directed/excused by Master Jody Horn or his assigns. See [8.0 – BLACK BELT CODE OF CONDUCT](#).

### 9.4.1 – Shoes

The only acceptable style of shoes to be worn with NMAA uniforms are sports shoes (sneakers / tennis shoes). Predominately **white or black** sports shoes are recommended. Flip flops, “Crocs,” and sandals are not acceptable.

### 9.4.2 – Competitor Appearance during Competition

The following is a guide for proper appearance while competing at an NMAA Tournament:

- Competitors will wear clean, pressed uniforms which are NMAA approved.
- A competitor may neatly roll up the sleeves of the traditional uniform. **Rolling up the sleeves past the elbow is strictly prohibited.**
- An NMAA patch is required to be worn by ALL competitors.
- All other lettering, striping, and patches must be in good repair and positioned according to NMAA guidelines.
- NO JEWELRY is allowed in uniform or during competition. This includes fitness tracking bands, watches, rings, earrings, necklaces, or other piercings (male or female), etc.

**Exceptions are:**

- ✓ Wedding bands, medical bracelets, and mandated religious medallions.

- ✓ Wedding rings with a protruding stone may be worn if taped and/or the stone is turned toward the palm. This is for the safety of the wearer as well as other competitors.
- ✓ Students with recently pierced ears can wear studded earrings but must tape them if participating in any sparring events.
- Fingernails and toenails should be trimmed for safety.
- Hair should be worn either short or gathered. This applies to both males and females.

### 9.4.3 – Team Jackets & Warm-ups

State and school pride are encouraged in the NMAA. However, team jackets and/or warm-ups may NOT be worn during competition; this includes “bow-in” and “bow-out.”

Team jackets and/or warm-ups cannot be worn while judging.

Team jackets and/or warm-ups **MAY** be worn before the rings starts and during the awards presentation (whether in the ring or on the victory podium). If awards are presented in the ring, students may wear their team jackets and/or warm-ups after the last event has concluded (before the “bow-out”).



## 10.0 – COMPETITION WEAPONS & GUIDELINES

Competing with weapons adds an exciting element to NMAA tournaments. However, there are strict guidelines as to which weapons may be used and which weapons are prohibited for safety reasons. This section outlines those guidelines and restrictions.

### 10.1 – Admissible Weapons

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NMAA competition weapons include the following:

- Single or Double Escrima.
- Single or Double Chucks.
- Long Staff.
- Double Long Staff (Extreme Weapons ONLY).
- Kamas (must use two).
- Gumdo (black belts ONLY).

### 10.2 – Weapon Specifications

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Weapons used for competition at NMAA tournaments should be inspected for safety by your school owner.

- Sparring Escrimas must be Actionflex™ Escrimas.
  - ✓ Little Dragons and Junior Color Belt divisions MUST use the 28" Sparring Escrima.
  - ✓ Teen and Adult Color Belt divisions MUST use the 31" Sparring Escrima.
- Sparring Swords must be Actionflex™ Swords.
  - ✓ Junior Black Belt divisions MUST use the 34" Sparring Sword.
  - ✓ Teen and Adult Black Belt divisions MUST use the 40" Sparring Sword.
- Single or Double Escrima (bamboo):
  - ✓ Sizes include 24" or 26" lengths.
  - ✓ No size requirement. Students should ask their instructor for guidance.
- Single or Double Chucks:
  - ✓ There are typically two sizes of Chucks. Students should compete with the larger pair if possible.

- ✓ Students should ask their instructor for guidance.
- Long Staff:
  - ✓ Length of weapon MUST be at least shoulder height.
  - ✓ Students should ask their instructor for guidance.
- Kamas:
  - ✓ Competitors may NOT use 'sharp' or 'edged' kamas in competition.
  - ✓ Students should ask their instructor for guidance.
- Sword (Korean Gumdo):
  - ✓ **Color Belts:** May NOT use the Sword in any competition event.
  - ✓ **Black Belts:** The act of sheathing and unsheathing the Sword is an integral aspect of a Sword presentation. Therefore, you should choose the longest size possible which will allow you to successfully sheath and unsheathe the Sword (the maximum length is approximately 41").
  - ✓ Swords used in Traditional Weapon Forms or Extreme Weapon Forms MUST be used with a scabbard.  
**Exception:** Junior Black Belts competing with the sword are exempt from using a scabbard.
  - ✓ A competitor must use the scabbard that is provided with the weapon. Example: A 35" weapon cannot be used with a 41" scabbard.
  - ✓ Competitors may NOT use 'sharp' or 'edged' swords in competition; these swords are also referred to as "cutting swords."
- Weapons labeled as 'performance weapons' or 'competition weapons' are allowed in Traditional Weapons and Extreme Weapons competitions.
- Bamboo weapons (Long Staffs, Chucks, and Escrimas) are allowed in Traditional Weapons and Extreme Weapons competitions.
- 'Edged' weapons (of any kind) are NOT allowed in any weapon competition.
- An Actionflex™ **Escrima** MAY be used in both Traditional Weapons competition as well as Extreme Weapons competition.

## 10.3 – Adornment & Altering Restrictions

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**Decorating:** putting anything on the weapon that was not included in the manufacturing of the weapon.

**Altering:** changing the weapon(s) from its original size, shape, or form by any means.

For Traditional and Extreme Weapons competitions (all ranks):

- The weapon(s) MAY be **decorated**. If in the opinion of the Tournament Director/Organizer, the decorations alter the weapon(s), the weapon(s) will not be allowed in competition. The Tournament Director's/Organizer's decision is final.
- Using two weapons that are identical except for the color falls under the category of decorated weapons. Therefore, they are allowed in weapon competitions.
- The weapon(s) MAY NOT be **altered** in any fashion.
- **Grip tape** is allowed on ALL weapons but must not alter the shape or reduce the size of the weapon. This includes sparring weapons.
- "Knowledge stripes" are not allowed on weapons.

## 11.0 – TOURNAMENT DIVISIONS

Tournament divisions are set by Master Jody Horn in consultation with the National Tournament Director and are designed to give everyone a fair opportunity. Divisions are split into four major categories: Little Dragons, Special Abilities, Color Belts, and Black Belts. Divisions are further broken down based on gender, age, and rank. At the conclusion of each tournament season, the National Tournament Director will evaluate the number of competitors in each division and determine if any changes are to be made for subsequent tournament seasons. See [5.0 – DETERMINING RING ASSIGNMENTS](#).

- **Juniors** are defined as competitors who are 11 years old or younger. Typically, Juniors are not younger than five years old.

The Junior Color Belt divisions will be split by age for the 2019-2020 tournament season. The split will form two groups: 8 years old and younger, and ages 9 to 11.

- **Teens** are defined as competitors who are 12 to 16 years old.
- **Adults** are defined as competitors who are 17 years old or older.

The Black Belt Men's division will be split by age for the 2019-2020 tournament season. The split will form two groups: ages 17 to 29, and 30 years old and older.

## 11.1 – Little Dragon Division

The overall purpose of encouraging Little Dragons to participate in the NMAA tournament process is to provide them with an **'introduction to competition.'** By handling "Little Dragon" divisions as an **'introduction to competition,'** we ensure that there will not be any "losers," only "winners." All children will be rewarded for what is important, their participation and effort. A key element of this ring is that it should be FUN!

The recommended ages for Little Dragons range from 3½ to 6 years old. Students who train as Little Dragons in their school should be allowed to participate in the Little Dragon division at NMAA tournaments. Likewise, students who train as a Karate Kids (Juniors) rather than Little Dragons should participate in the junior divisions. Students should consult with their instructor as to which division is appropriate for them to compete in.

The following guidelines are for Little Dragon divisions:

- It is strongly recommended that each Little Dragon division have no more than 8 participants. However, having 10 participants is acceptable.
- White, white/orange, orange, orange/yellow, and yellow belts will participate in Self-Defense.
- Yellow/camo, camo, camo/green, green, green/purple, purple, purple/blue, blue, blue/brown, brown, brown/red, and red belts will participate in Traditional Point Sparring. These Little Dragons may choose to also compete in Weapon Sparring.

- In Little Dragon rings, male and female participants may be in the same ring. This is true for all ranks; including those that spar and weapon spar.

For more on Little Dragon judging, see [23.0 – LITTLE DRAGONS: RULE ADJUSTMENTS](#).

## 11.2 – Special Abilities Division

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This facet of the NMAA student body cannot grow and succeed through the efforts of just a few; it takes everyone. Therefore, the purpose for having tournament divisions for students with special needs is to offer a safe and fair competition experience for all students regardless of their physical or mental aptitudes. The remarkable challenge is in deciding who can fairly compete in the Special Abilities division.

### 11.2.1 – Competitor Eligibility: Special Abilities

There are separate divisions for those with cognitive challenges and for those with physical challenges. These divisions are for each age group. To determine which division a member should compete in, the competitor's diagnosis, which requires the most adaptation for daily life, will be considered.

### 11.2.2 – Definitions of Special Abilities Subdivisions

In addition to meeting the general requirements to compete in NMAA tournaments, those eligible to compete in Special Abilities must have at least one of the following:

- Permanent Physical Limitation.
- Impaired Mental Acuity.
- Autism Spectrum Diagnosis.

**Permanent Physical Limitation:** permanent physical condition that would put the competitor at an extreme disadvantage against peers with no significant physical challenges.

Below are examples of a permanent physical limitation that would deem competitors eligible to compete in Special Abilities:

- Has a bone, muscle, or nerve disorder that severely limits their physical mobility.
- Is missing a limb, two legs, or two arms.
- Has an artificial leg(s).
- Is forced to use a wheelchair or other device to maintain mobility.
- Is blind.

Examples of physical limitations that would disqualify a student from competing in Special Abilities are:

- Muscle pulls, strains, or tears; or recovering from a surgery or procedure that temporarily limits physical mobility.
- Is hearing impaired.

- Has a seizure disorder.
- Minor, arthritic conditions or joint replacement.

**Impaired Mental Acuity:** mental condition which puts a competitor at an extreme disadvantage due to an inability to comprehend all aspects of the competition.

Some examples of impaired mental acuity would include (but are not limited to):

- Cognitively disabled (impaired ability to function independently).
- Low functioning Autism.
- Down syndrome.

Below are some examples of conditions that would deem the competitor ineligible. These disabilities include but are not limited to:

- Learning disabilities.
- Dyslexia.
- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD).
- Attention Deficit / Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD).
- Psychiatric diagnoses.

**The Autism Spectrum:** refers to individuals who have been placed on the autism spectrum by the accepted two step evaluation process, (developmental screening and comprehensive diagnostic evaluation). Some competitors with autism will be in this category, while it is possible that a person with lower cognitive abilities may be placed in the cognitive division. Where an individual falls on the spectrum will help the committee decide whether a competitor belongs in Special-A or Special-C (please see eligibility procedures for how this will be determined).

### 11.2.3 – *Special Abilities Eligibility Procedures*

After reviewing the submitted documentation, any competitor wishing to compete in the Special Abilities division must be approved by the National Tournament Director or their assigns.

The following is required before any competitor can compete in Special Abilities:

Email your request and supporting documentation of the student's disability to the National Tournament Director. The current National Tournament Director is **Mrs. Emma Horn – Emma@NMAAlliance.com**.

After reviewing the submitted documentation, a decision will be rendered. If additional information is required, the applicant's instructor will be contacted.

The applicant will receive the determination in writing (via Email).

"Approval to compete" does not have to be renewed each year. However, some individuals on the autism spectrum can have their needs change as they grow and develop; therefore, Special-A competitors must resubmit their application annually. Resubmitting an application annually is a standard procedure; all

parties involved should remember that there are times when individuals, especially younger competitors, will outgrow their need to be in the Special Abilities division.

Competitors who have been approved to compete in Special Abilities MUST do so for the entire tournament year. Failure to comply may result in revoking the student's 'Special Abilities' status.

**Any "TOP TEN" points awarded to anyone who is inappropriately placed in the Special Abilities division for competition will be forfeited.**

Please remember, the intent of these divisions is to provide those who qualify with an opportunity to earn the self-respect and self-esteem they could not have previously earned. Being fair and safe, regardless of function levels and/or disabilities, is the goal of the Special Abilities competition. For more information on judging Special Abilities, see [22.0 – SPECIAL ABILITIES: RULE ADJUSTMENTS](#).

## 11.3 – Black Belt Division

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Black belt divisions will be strictly followed at National events. However, on a state level, it is often difficult to strictly follow these divisions. Thus, on a state level, some discretion is given to the State Tournament Organizer when dividing or combining divisions to make competition fun and fair. State Tournament Organizers will follow the guidelines given to them by the National Tournament Director.

- Junior black belts must never be combined with Teen black belts. However, combining genders in each respective age group is allowed for facilitating competition.
- Adult black belt divisions may be combined at the discretion of the Tournament Director/Organizer to facilitate competition.
- Depending on ring and judge availability, Junior, Teen, and Adult Black Belt divisions **can sustain up to 16 competitors in the ring before being divided (regardless of height)**. Black belts are vying for National Champion points and need to have the experience of going against the taller or shorter opponents throughout the year.
- Black Belts must demonstrate the entire form for their respective rank in order to compete except in cases when the "6 Month Rule" applies. See [17.4.2 – Admissible Competition Forms for Black Belts](#).

## 11.4 – Color Belt Division

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To promote color belt competition at state events as well as provide color belts with a positive experience, color belt rings will be either classified as Regular or Competitive.

### 11.4.1 – Regular Division Guidelines

Regular divisions will be offered and carried out at all NMAA sanctioned tournaments. The purpose of the Regular division is to give an inexperienced, or less confident, student the option of gaining tournament experience before moving into the Competitive divisions.

**The following guidelines apply for a Regular division:**

- Regular divisions are for junior color belt students ages 11 and under ONLY.
- The choice to compete in the Regular division can be made on a tournament-by-tournament basis. Students should consult with their instructor as to which division to compete in.
- Competitors may elect to compete in the Regular division at a tournament even if they have competed in the Competitive division at a previous tournament. These competitors will NOT lose points that were previously earned in the Competitive division.
- If competitors choose to compete in the Regular division, they must compete in the Regular division for all events in which they registered including Extreme events. For example: a competitor may not compete in the Regular division in Traditional Sparring and the Competitive division in both Traditional Forms and Extreme Forms.
- Having Regular divisions are required at all sanctioned state tournaments and must be advertised accordingly.
- When competing in Traditional Forms in a Regular ring, competitors are not required to have their form memorized. **A Form Leader will assist these competitors by physically leading them through the *first half* of their form.** Based on their traditional judging assignments, judges will formulate their score according to what the competitor demonstrates. ALL competitors **MUST** be assisted by the Form Leader regardless of whether the competitor has the form memorized or not.
- For Traditional Weapons competition, the Regular divisions will run the same as the Competitive divisions.
- For Traditional Point Sparring / Self-Defense and Weapon Sparring competitions, the Regular divisions will run the same as the Competitive divisions.
- No State Champ points will be awarded in a Regular division. (Even if one competes in the Regular division by mistake).



## 11.4.2 – Dividing Regular Divisions for Color Belts

In effort to provide better customer service to beginners and other Regular Division competitors who have little to no tournament experience, **when there are rings and judges available**, rings may be split at the discretion of the Tournament Director/Organizer. Traditionally, a ring containing five or more competitors is considered a “full” ring.

## 11.4.3 – Competitive Division Guidelines

Competitive divisions are available for the students who wish to compete at a higher level and possibly earn points towards the State “TOP TEN” standings.

Regular divisions are NOT available for color belts ages 12 years and older; these students will compete in the Competitive division.

### NOTE:

**Starting at the 2020-2021 Tournament Season, ALL color belts competing in the Competitive Division MUST perform the ENTIRE color belt form.**

## 11.4.4 – Dividing Competitive Color Belt Divisions

Due to the vast difference (from state to state) of the number of competitors at each event, it is not feasible to issue comprehensive rules concerning how the color belt divisions will be formed. State Tournament Organizers will try, whenever possible, to follow the national standards for color belt competitions. They may, at their discretion, combine or alter color belt divisions to facilitate competition. However, **all Adult color belt rings will not be split unless there are more than 16 in the ring regardless of height**. Adults have a better understanding of the concept of competition and in general want more competition. Junior color belt rings will be combined to facilitate competition. The combination guidelines are handled by the Tournament Director/Organizer of the event. See [5.1 – Combining & Dividing Divisions](#).

## 12.0 – COMPETITION EVENTS

Participants are required to compete in the Traditional Forms and Traditional Sparring events (or Self-Defense for Little Dragons and Beginner Juniors).

**Exception:** Medical excuse. See [7.4.1 – Registration Fees](#).

Competitors are not required to compete in other events offered at tournaments.

Students should consult their instructor to determine the extent of their participation. An instructor or judge should NOT force or intimidate students to compete in events in which they are not confident.

## 12.1 – Traditional Forms Competition

The following procedures are indicative of how each ring is to be run at every NMAA tournament:

- To begin Traditional Forms competition, the Center Judge will call each competitor's name, one at a time, to perform their form for the judges. As an additional courtesy to the competitors and their families, the Center Judge should also announce the competitor "on deck" (meaning: announce who will perform their form next).
- When their name is called, each competitor will answer "Yes, Sir/Ma'am," run to the center of the ring, stand at attention, and wait for the Center Judge's directions. When given the command to begin, each competitor will demonstrate their form at their own pace.
- When finished, each competitor will hold the position of the last movement until given the command to return and will not leave the ring until dismissed.
- In every division, the first three competitors will demonstrate their form and then be dismissed to the side. This will allow the judges to evaluate the ring and determine the general ability of the competitors. At the conclusion of the third competitor's form demonstration, all three competitors will be brought back into the ring and given scores. Every subsequent competitor will be scored immediately following the performance of their form.
- The Center Judge will announce scores from their left to their right, calling out Judge A's score, then the Center Judge's score, and finally Judge B's score. Judges should keep their scores visible until the Scorekeeper has repeated the scores back to the Center Judge for verification.
- When the scores are recorded on the score sheet, the only number recorded is the number following the decimal. For each individual, the recorded scores will be added together to determine the total form score. The winner is determined by the competitor who receives the highest overall score.
- After all competitors have had an opportunity to demonstrate their forms, the Center Judge will check the addition of the scores and determine if there are any ties.
- If a tie should occur for first, second, or third place, the run-off system will be used. See [17.4.14 – Resolving Ties](#).

## 12.2 – Traditional Weapons Competition

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Traditional Weapons competition procedures will be consistent with Traditional Forms procedures with the following additions:

- Color Belts will perform a 30 second “free-style” with their weapon of choice.
- During color belt competition, the Scorekeeper will start the clock at the command of the Center Judge and will call out “Time” when 30 seconds has expired (at which time the student must stop performing within a second or two).
- Black Belt weapon forms do not need to be timed as they are a part of the NMAA curriculum.
- The use of resin, resin bags, or other products intended for use to dry the hands prior to performing is allowed.

## 12.3 – Self-Defense (Bully/Stranger) Competition

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- Karate Kids and Little Dragons who are white, orange, and yellow belts are eligible to compete in the Self-Defense competition. Teens and Adults who are white, orange, and yellow belts are eligible to compete in Traditional Point Sparring and Weapon Sparring.
- If a student is wearing a camo belt at a tournament, they will not be allowed to compete in the Self-Defense event, even if they have just recently been promoted. See [7.2.1 – Color Belt Competitors](#).
- The Center Judge will act as the competitor’s “partner” for each self-defense demonstration.
- The self-defense sequences will be performed in the order determined by the Center Judge. The Center Judge will NOT ask competitor ‘A’ to do the Bully Self-Defense and competitor ‘B’ to do the Stranger Danger Self-Defense in the same round. Both competitors will be asked to do the same self-defense sequence for the first round and the other self-defense sequence for the second round.
- If there is a tie (1 – 1) and a tiebreaker is necessary, competitors can elect to use either the Bully defense or the Stranger defense during the final round.
- A competitor must receive a total of two points to win the match.
- A self-defense match will last for a maximum of three rounds.

## 12.4 – Traditional Point Sparring Competition

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At all sanctioned NMAA tournaments, ranks of Camo belt and above may compete in Traditional Point Sparring and Weapon Sparring events.

In addition, White, Orange, and Yellow belts, age 12 and older, may also compete in Traditional Point Sparring and Weapon Sparring events. **White, Orange, and Yellow belt Teens and Adults who do not have sparring gear are NOT required to compete in Traditional Point Sparring.**

Below is a systematic checklist detailing the steps taken to effectively execute a tournament sparring ring:

- Prior to the first sparring match, the Center Judge will personally check the ring timer to ensure it is working properly.
- Prior to Traditional Point Sparring competition, the Center Judge must verify that all competitors are wearing all the required sparring gear and that all gear is 'NMAA approved.' See [12.4.1 – Required Safety Gear](#).
- The bracket for Traditional Point Sparring will be set up using the NMAA bye system. Once the bracket has been completed, it is imperative that the Center Judge confirms that all the competitors listed on the bracket are indeed competing in the event. See [16.0 – NMAA BYE SYSTEM](#).
- Then, announce the competitors who received byes.
- The Center Judge will call up the competitors in pairs according to the sparring bracket.
- When their name is called, each competitor will answer "Yes, Sir/Ma'am!" and run to the mark indicated by the Center Judge. From that point to the end of the match, the competitors will follow the instructions of the Center Judge.
- The competitor on the Center Judge's right will always be red and this will be indicated by having the competitor reverse their NMAA chest protector to show red facing outwards. The other opponent will be asked to wear the NMAA chest protector with the black side facing outward.
- Each round will be timed for a maximum of two minutes.
- Time runs continuously unless the Center Judge (or one of the Corner Judges) announces "Stop Time!" indicating that time should be stopped. Reasons for stopping time include but are not limited to the following:
  - ✓ Calling a warning.
  - ✓ Attending to an injured competitor.
  - ✓ Correcting a sparring gear or weapon malfunction.
  - ✓ Correcting a score or time discrepancy.
- The competitor who reaches 5 points before the end of the two minutes is the winner.

- If regulation time expires before a competitor reaches 5 points, the competitor who scored the greater number of points will be declared the winner (unless a disqualification has been declared). See [19.5.6 – Disqualification](#).
- If the score is tied, the winner will be determined by “sudden victory”; the first competitor to score the next point will win.
- “Sudden victory” has no time limit.
- If a penalty point is awarded during “sudden victory,” the match is over and the competitor who received the point is the winner.
- Before advancing to the next round, the winner of each match will confirm their name with the Scorekeeper to ensure that the proper competitor is credited with the win. It is the Center Judge’s responsibility to ensure the correct competitor advances.
- After the semifinal matches, the competitors not advancing to the finals will spar for third place.
- There will be a one-minute break before the third-place match commences.
- Once the third-place match is completed, the final match will determine first and second place.

**Note:**

A disqualification or warning given during Traditional Point Sparring competition does not carry forward to Weapon Sparring except for unsportsmanlike conduct. See [19.5.7 – Unsportsmanlike Conduct Warnings](#).

### 12.4.1 – Required Safety Gear

All safety gear must be purchased through the NMAA. Only NMAA approved gear (with the NMAA logo) is allowed in competition at NMAA sanctioned tournaments. The following safety gear is required by all competitors in a sparring competition including Weapon Sparring:

- “Open” or “closed” hand gear (all finger joints must be covered when a fist is made).
- Feet gear (back of heel & all toes must be covered).
- Head gear with attached plastic face shield.
- Black and red reversible chest protector (must cover all ribs and sternum).
- Mouthpiece (mandatory, even while wearing the face shield).
- Groin protector (cup and supporter) for males.
  - ✓ NO age exceptions.
  - ✓ MUST be worn under uniform pants.
- To guard against accidental contact to the face, ‘safety glasses’ or ‘safety goggles’ **MUST** be worn by all students wishing to compete in Weapon Sparring. Prescription glasses may be considered as alternative eye protection.
- No additional stickers, decorations or adornments may be added to the required safety gear.

All gear **MUST** be in good repair. Torn, taped, or worn out gear will **NOT** be allowed. ***No one, including instructors or parents, can give permission to alter the rules pertaining to the use of safety gear.*** Competitors who do not have all the proper equipment may borrow from another competitor or purchase the equipment at the event, if possible.

**Example:** A competitor may **NOT** tape their chest protector to keep it from opening.

**Note:**

Competitors transferring to the NMAA with safety gear purchased from another organization **MIGHT** be temporarily allowed to compete with it if approved by Master Jody Horn on a case-by-case basis.

## 12.4.2 – Legal Target Areas & Techniques

In a Traditional Point Sparring competition, points are scored by competitors using only hand or foot techniques to legal target areas. The following guidelines apply:

- **Hand techniques** may only strike the front of the torso.
  - ✓ The front of the torso is defined as the front of the body starting at the bottom of the belt (waistline) and going up to the base of the throat, and from one side seam of the uniform to the other side seam.
  - ✓ Legal hand techniques include only the following: punch, backfist, hammer fist, ridge hand, and knife hand techniques.
  - ✓ Striking techniques directed towards or contacting areas outside of this definition will be considered illegal. See 19.5 – Warnings.
- **Foot techniques** may only strike the following:
  - ✓ The front of the torso: the front of the body starting at the bottom of the belt (waistline) and going up to the base of the throat, and from one side seam of the uniform to the other side seam.
  - ✓ The head and neck, excluding the throat. The sides and back of the neck and all areas of the head (front, back, top, and sides) are legal targets; this includes the face shield.
  - ✓ Kicking techniques directed towards or contacting areas outside of this definition will be considered illegal. See 19.5 – Warnings.

## 12.4.3 – Illegal Target Areas & Techniques

Illegal target areas include any part of the body not described in the above definitions. The type of technique, striking or kicking, will determine which definition to use.

In Traditional Point Sparring, illegal target areas include:

- Kicking or striking below the belt. This includes side, front, and back areas.
- Kicking or striking the back of the torso.

- Kicking or striking the throat.
- Hand techniques to the head or neck.

In Traditional Point Sparring, illegal techniques include:

- Blind hand and kicking techniques are illegal. A hand or kicking technique is considered “blind” if the attacker is not looking at the target at the time the technique is executed. A spinning backfist would be an example of a “blind” hand technique. Executing a spin heel kick while not looking at the target would be an example of a “blind” kicking technique.
- Fingertip techniques are not allowed.

### 12.4.4 – Neutral Areas

Neutral Area: neither a legal nor illegal target area. When contact is made to a neutral area, it will not score or be penalized. The arms and tops of the shoulders are neutral areas.

### 12.4.5 – Target Point Values: Traditional Sparring

Scoring points are achieved by striking to or near the legal target areas with legal hand or foot techniques.

The following techniques will score points:

- **Grounded or jumping hand techniques** to the front of the torso will score **1-point**.
- **Grounded foot techniques** to the front of the torso will score **1-point**.
- **Grounded foot techniques** to the head, face, side of the neck, or back of the neck will score **2-points**.
- **Jumping foot techniques** to the front of the torso will score **2-points**.
- **Jumping foot techniques to the head** will score **3-points**.
- For a technique to qualify as a jump kick, the non-kicking foot must be off the ground during the point of contact with (or within proximity of) the legal target area.
- Competitors who are falling while executing a technique to a legal target area:
  - ✓ **Cannot** score if their fall is caused by slipping, tripping, or other self-inflicted actions.
  - ✓ **Can** score if their fall is caused by body contact from their opponent.
- Competitors cannot score if any part of their body is touching the ground other than their feet.
- **Color Belts** are NOT required to make contact to score points. However, controlled contact to legal areas is allowed. In the spirit of safety, if a judge feels that a technique was close enough to score and the defender made no attempt to block or evade, a point should be awarded.
- **Black Belts** MUST make controlled contact to score points. Heavy contact is NOT allowed and may be subject to a contact warning. See [19.5.5 – Excessive Contact Warning](#).

## 12.5 – Weapon Sparring Competition

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Weapon Sparring competition procedures will be consistent with Traditional Point Sparring procedures with the following amendments:

- The competitor who reaches 10 points before the end of the two minutes is the winner.
- If regulation time expires before a competitor reaches 10 points, the competitor who scored the greater number of points will be declared the winner (unless a disqualification has been declared). See [19.5.6 – Disqualification](#).

### 12.5.1 – Required Safety Equipment

#### Sparring Weapon

Color Belts will compete with a Sparring Escrima.

Black Belts will compete with a Sparring Sword.

The Actionflex™ Escrimas and the Actionflex™ Swords are currently the only sparring weapons approved for competition in the NMAA. **Competitors are restricted as to what length of weapon they may use in Weapon Sparring.** See [10.2 – Weapon Specifications](#).

All competitors are required to have their own Sparring Weapon. If a competitor's sparring weapon breaks during competition, they will be granted 60 seconds to find a replacement. See [12.5.8 – Dropped or Broken Weapons](#).

Any other sparring "style" weapons must be exclusively approved by Master Jody Horn.

#### Sparring Gear

The sparring gear requirements for Weapon Sparring are the same as Traditional Point Sparring with exception of glove choice. There are two options for gloves, traditional sparring gloves or bag gloves.

*\*The NMAA is currently working on an official Sparring Glove for Weapon Sparring.*

#### Safety Glasses

Plastic safety glasses or prescription sports glasses (or goggles) are required for Weapon Sparring. The eye opening on the face shield does not adequately protect the eyes from a horizontal strike to the face with the sparring weapons. Therefore, safety glasses will be required for all Weapon Sparring competitors.

### 12.5.2 – Legal/Illegal Target Areas & Techniques

Points in Weapon Sparring are awarded for striking or stabbing with the weapon to a legal target area. Points can also be awarded as a result of a dropped weapon. Competitors can NOT score using the handle of the sparring weapon.



The entire body is a legal target area in Weapon Sparring with the following exceptions:

- Groin.
- Stab to the head.
- Any area of the neck not covered by headgear (face shield is considered part of the headgear).

With the use of safety glasses, horizontal strikes to the face are legal. However, caution should be used with these types of strikes.

## 12.5.3 – Target Point Values: Weapon Sparring

Strikes with the weapon to a legal contact area will result in the following points with a maximum of three points given at any one time:

- A legal strike or stab to the body not including the head or weapon-holding arm above the elbow will score **1-point**.
- A legal strike to the head or the weapon-holding arm (below the elbow) will score **2-points**. When wielding a sparring sword **OR** sparring Escrima, if both hands are holding the weapon, both arms are considered "weapon-holding arms."
- Jumping techniques will **add 1-point** to the total score. A jumping technique is defined as a strike making contact to a legal target area while both attacker's feet are off the ground.

## 12.5.4 – Weapon Striking Contact Level

### Sparring Escrima Strikes

Strikes and stabs must be effective (solid contact) and under control to be considered a scoring technique by the judges.

"Nicks" and "uniform pops" are NOT considered legit scoring techniques in Escrima Sparring.

### Sparring Sword Strikes

Sword strikes must consist of "full" motion cuts and under control to be considered a scoring technique by the judges. Simply bumping into the opponent with the sparring sword will not count as a scoring technique.

"Nicks" or "uniform pops" ARE legit scoring techniques in Sword Sparring as it exhibits actual sword qualities. (In real life: A razor sharp sword tip would be effective if it "nicked" the opponent.)

ALL strikes with the sparring sword must be initiated with both hands wielding the weapon. However, competitors MAY release one hand **in the middle of the strike** to gain more reach.

## 12.5.5 – Blind Techniques

Blind techniques are considered dangerous and should NOT score as they are considered uncontrolled and MAY warrant a penalty.

### 12.5.6 – “Three Points of Contact”

Competitors must maintain three points of contact (or less) with the ground to legally score points. A knee on the ground is considered two point of contact (knee + foot).

**Example:** One or two feet on the ground; one knee and one foot; one foot and one hand, etc. An example of a technique that is NOT allowed is: one hand, one knee (plus foot), and the other foot, (four points of contact).

### 12.5.7 – Parrying, Blocking, & Disarming

For Weapon Sparring competition, **parrying** means to pass or deflect the opponent’s weapon with the defender’s weapon, thereby causing it to miss the desired target. Parrying of your opponent’s weapon is allowed.

For Weapon Sparring competition, **blocking** means to resist your opponent’s weapon with an opposing counterforce. Blocking your opponent’s strike with your weapon is allowed but pushing your opponent is not allowed. Blocking your opponent’s weapon with your hand will result in a point awarded to your opponent.

For Weapon Sparring competition, you may **disarm** your opponent by hitting your opponent’s hand, arm, or weapon. However, you may NOT disarm your opponent using a “trapping technique” – where you grab your opponent’s weapon.

### 12.5.8 – Dropped or Broken Weapons

Dropping the Sparring Weapon any time after the match begins will result in a point awarded to the opponent. In Weapon Sparring, a weapon is considered dropped if the weapon leaves the competitor’s hand and hits the ground. If the weapon leaves the competitor’s hand and the competitor catches it before it touches the ground, it is not considered a dropped weapon.

If the weapon breaks during the competition, the competitor will be given an opportunity to replace it. A broken weapon is not a dropped weapon, and the competitor will not be penalized in this case. If the weapon is not replaced within 60 seconds, the competitor will forfeit the match.

## 12.7 – Extreme Competition

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Extreme Forms and Extreme Weapons competitions are a “freestyle” performance that allows a mix of traditional and contemporary martial arts techniques. The Extreme division category for forms and weapons competition is based in traditional NMAA Taekwondo but allows for non-traditional movements spanning all martial arts styles and disciplines. Martial arts techniques and combinations will carry a higher value over non-martial arts techniques such as gymnastics, acrobatics, and dance.

There are no “qualifying techniques” that must be performed.

### 12.7.1 – Eligibility Requirements

In addition to the regular eligibility requirements, in order to compete in any Extreme competition, **the competitor must also compete in the correlating traditional event.** Failure to compete in the corresponding event will result in the loss of points earned at that event may lead to additional penalties. This applies to all NMAA sanctioned tournaments.

**Example:** If a competitor wishes to compete in Extreme Weapons, the competitor must also compete in Traditional Weapons at that tournament.

### 12.7.2 – Uniform Requirements for Extreme Competition

Students may wear:

- NMAA Extreme Uniform. See [9.2 – NMAA Extreme Uniform](#).
- Traditional Taekwondo Uniform. See [9.1 – Traditional Taekwondo Uniform](#).

No other uniforms are allowed.

Competitors may not remove any part of their clothing during their performance.

### 12.7.3 – Music

- Music is allowed but not mandatory.
- If music is used, competitors who perform “in time” with the music may receive a higher score.
- Instructors must pre-approve all music used by their students in the Extreme competitions.
- Once a competitor’s name is called, they will be granted a maximum of 30 seconds to perform a sound check (if needed).
- Music is the responsibility of the competitor. Each competitor must have a sound system in good working order. Malfunctions of any kind will not change the time limit once the clock has started.
- Once the competitor is “bowed-in” and the Center Judge announces, “your time begins now!” the total time limit of two minutes will stand regardless of any music malfunction. If there is any delay, competitors are encouraged to continue without music. The person designated to play the music should take the appropriate action in keeping with the wishes of the competitor. See [13.6 – Assisting Competitors](#).
- Sound systems must have their own power source; they may not be plugged into wall outlets while being used for competition.

## 13.0 – SPECTATOR ETIQUETTE

### 13.1 – “No Coaching” Rule

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It is the responsibility of the judges to ensure that no one receives coaching during any competition. There will be no coaching from the sidelines by anyone, including color belts, black belts, instructors, family members, or friends. **This no-coaching rule is in effect from the time the competitors are “bowed into their ring” until the time they are “bowed out of their ring.”** This includes quietly telling a student what to do between matches in sparring, or before a tiebreaker in forms/weapons. Cheering and offering encouragement is indeed allowed and encouraged. Competitors may be issued a warning during sparring events if they are receiving coaching from anyone outside the ring. See [19.5.2 – Non-Contact Warnings](#).

### 13.2 – Cheering

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Cheering is allowed and encouraged by all spectators as well as by other competitors with these exceptions:

- “Booing” and other outward forms of disgust are deemed as disrespectful and distasteful. If spectators feel that the judging or the competition is unfair or unjust, they should bring it to a Tournament Official immediately. See [13.5 – Correctable Errors](#) for more information.
- Over-exuberant cheering to the point that it disrupts the ring or surrounding rings is not allowed. This includes the use of “noise-makers” like air horns, cow bells, and mega-phones.
- “Cheering” is defined as clapping, whistling, and giving words of encouragement. Giving direction, guidance, or commands is considered “coaching” and is not allowed by anyone. See [13.1 – “No Coaching” Rule](#).

**Example:** Saying, “Great Job Johnny! Keep it up!” is allowed. However, saying, “Kick him! Kick him in the head!” is considered coaching.

### 13.3 – Seating

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There are typically two types of seating at tournaments: ring-side seating and stadium seating.

If there is room on the competition floor, Ring-side seating is used. Chairs will be lined up around the ring in an orderly fashion. Spectators should not move the chairs or block entry into the rings in any way.

Also, spectators must exercise caution during sparring events as the "action" can sometimes be unpredictable and cause injury to spectators in the front row.

Some venues do not allow enough room on the competition floor for seating. Instead, these venues have stadium seating. A basketball gym or a professional sport arena are examples of venues with stadium seating.

Please be aware, if stadium seating is being used, gathering around the ring to watch the competition will either be prohibited or restricted to only those assisting the competitors. See [13.6 – Assisting Competitors](#).

## 13.4 – Pictures & Video Recording

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Taking pictures or making video recordings of the competition are allowed. However, spectators should be aware of following details regarding photographs or video recording:

- The use of cameras and video equipment is at the risk of the owner. Some spectators choose to use tripods to record the action and leave them unattended. The NMAA, tournament staff, and/or the judges are not responsible for any damage to video equipment used during competition.
- Flash photography is discouraged as it is an unnecessary distraction to the competitors.
- Judges are NOT allowed to review video used to dispute a call that was made. However, there are, at times, instances when the Tournament Director/Organizer may review a recording if there is a malfunction with the ring timer or any other matter which might be in the best interests of the entire ring.
- Since NMAA tournaments are considered public events, spectators may take photographs or video of ANY performance they wish. However, any use of photos or video footage that is used to discredit, defame, or disrespect another member of the NMAA on social media or other means will be reviewed and may result in disciplinary action.

## 13.5 – Correctable Errors

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As in most competitions, there exists the possibility of "correctable errors." Judgment calls such as scores given, or points called in sparring are not considered a correctable error. An instructor, parent, or competitor may ask for clarification if they believe a "correctable error" has been made. The Tournament Director/Organizer will be responsible for this determination, and their decision will be final. If an instructor, parent, or competitor would like to discuss the decision of the Tournament Director/Organizer, they may do so after the tournament has concluded. This should occur through the proper "chain of command."

If anyone (Senior, Parent, Competitor, Spectator, or Judge) feels there is a problem with a "call" or procedure in a specific ring or event, they should notify the National Tournament Director or the State Tournament Organizer with the concern. The National Tournament Director or the State Tournament Organizer will decide if any changes should occur. See [1.1 – Chain of Command](#).

## 13.6 – Assisting Competitors

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Assisting competitors is restricted to these conditions:

- Parents of Little Dragons are encouraged to assist with sparring gear.
- Parents of Special Abilities competitors are encouraged to assist their child with any personal needs during the competition.
- During Extreme competition, competitors may appoint someone to assist them with operating their music box. See [12.7.3 – Music](#).

## 13.7 – Dress Code for Spectators

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The NMAA has a strict dress code for black belts, judges, and all competitors. For those students who are not competing as well as guests, please follow the guidelines listed below:

- Students attending the tournament as spectators should still dress appropriately as they represent their school, their family, and the NMAA. If there are questions as to what is deemed as “appropriate attire,” students should consult with their instructor.
- Spectators and other guests should keep in mind that although NMAA tournaments are open to the public, we are a family organization. Choosing to wear clothing in the presence of children that is derogatory, inappropriate, or offensive is strongly discouraged. Respecting family values and helping protect our children are very important to the NMAA.

# JUDGES

## 14.0 – JUDGING POSITIONS & QUALIFICATIONS

### 14.1 – Corner Judge

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The following rules and guidelines apply to a Corner Judge:

- Must be at least 12 years of age and a First-Degree Black Belt or higher.
- May corner judge any color belt ring.
- May corner judge any black belt ring up to, but not higher than, the Corner Judge's current rank.
- Judges 16 years of age or younger may not judge competitors who are older than them.
- May center judge a Little Dragon ring with permission from the Tournament Director/Organizer.
- Must know all the following material:
  - ✓ All color belt forms.
  - ✓ Bully and Stranger Danger Self-Defense for white, orange and yellow belt ranks.
  - ✓ Be familiar with all the weapons allowed for color belt Traditional Weapons competition.
- To qualify as a Corner Judge, Black Belts **MUST** have prior tournament experience as a Scorekeeper.

### 14.2 – Center Judge

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The following rules and guidelines apply to a Center Judge:

- Must be at least 18 years of age and a First-Degree Black Belt or higher.
- May corner judge or center judge a color belt ring.
- May corner judge any black belt ring up to, but not higher than, the Corner Judge's current rank.
- May center judge any black belt ring up to one rank lower than the Center Judge's current rank.
- Must know all material required for a Corner Judge.
- Must know the black belt forms up to the Center Judge's current rank.
- Must know all weapon forms included in the NMAA's black belt curriculum (up to their rank).
- To qualify as a Center Judge, Black Belts **MUST** have prior tournament experience as a Corner Judge.

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## 14.3 – Form Leader

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The following rules and guidelines apply to a Form Leader:

- Must be a Red Belt or higher.
- There is no age requirement for Form Leaders. However, the student's ability to "lead" and communicate is critical to be successful at this position.
- May corner judge Little Dragon rings.
- Must know all the following material:
  - ✓ All color belt forms (Shimsan 1-6).
  - ✓ Bully and Stranger Danger Self-Defense for white, orange and yellow belt ranks.
  - ✓ Be familiar with all the weapons allowed for color belt Traditional Weapons competition.
- It is highly recommended that anyone who desires to qualify as a Form Leader have prior teaching experience with color belts and Little Dragons.

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## 14.4 – Scorekeeper

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The following rules and guidelines apply to a Scorekeeper:

- Must be at least 10 years of age and a white belt or higher.
- Must know all the following material:
  - ✓ How to keep proper time during all sparring events.
  - ✓ How to record scores for all forms and weapon forms events.
  - ✓ How to record scores for all sparring events.
- It is highly recommended that any person who desires to qualify as a Scorekeeper have prior experience score keeping like at a "fun" tournament.

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## 14.5 – Obtaining Judging Credentials

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The NMAA takes great pride in the training of black belts to be judges at state and national tournaments. A black belt is trained over time to be qualified as a Form Leader, Score Keeper, Corner Judge, and Center Judge. All competition rings (except Little Dragon rings) will have three qualified black belts to judge the competitors. Judges of all ranks should stay "current" by attending judging clinics and successfully passing the written and physical exam at least once a year.



All judging clinics are at no cost to the student.

The requirements to qualify for any judging position are the same:

**1. "Read the rules" and "know the rules."**

2. Receive practical training from your instructor.
3. Have your instructor verify your knowledge of the curriculum required for that judging position.
4. Attend and participate in a judging clinic which emphasizes the practical application of the rules and is taught by State Tournament Organizer or the person designated to fill that role. At the completion of the clinic, the tournament official will administer a physical and written exam.
5. Students must pass the written exam for the appropriate judging position with a score of 85% or better. The exam is multiple-choice.
6. Judging clinic participants will also be tested on their knowledge of junior forms up to and including their current rank.
7. Receive and sew on the NMAA Tournament patch that correlates to the position you qualified for. The NMAA Tournament patch should be sewn on the left shoulder and should replace any other patches of lower position. Each position is represented by a different colored patch. Below is a list identifying each tournament patch:
  - ✓ Scorekeeper = White patch.
  - ✓ Form Leader = Green patch.
  - ✓ Corner Judge = Red patch.
  - ✓ Center Judge = Blue patch.
  - ✓ State Tournament Organizer = Black patch.
  - ✓ National Tournament Director = Black patch with gold text.

**Notes:**

- Attending the black belt meeting the morning of a tournament will not fulfill the judging clinic attendance requirement.
- A black belt or Senior instructor should NEVER request, suggest, or imply that the Tournament Director/Organizer qualify or re-qualify a judge for any judging level without that person attending a judging clinic and taking the respective tests, regardless of the student's rank or experience.
- Any student, regardless of rank, who, with their instructor's permission, desires to attend a judging clinic in effort to gain knowledge and experience is permitted to participate.
- All students who wish to "stay current" must attend a judging clinic at least once a year.

## 14.6 – Responsibilities of the Judges

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During competition, judges will:

- Remain at their assignment or assigned ring until relieved or replaced by the Tournament Director/Organizer or their assigns.
- Refrain from showing prejudice regardless of the students' school or origin.
- Recognize that small differences in form technique demonstrated by students from other schools and states are natural and to be expected.
- Be courteous and respectful to all competitors in both word and deed.
- Ensure the safety and positive experience of every competitor.
- Hold each competitor accountable for following the NMAA's Official Tournament Rules.
- Conduct each aspect of competition in the proper order.
- Recognize the winners in each division/event and present them with their appropriate award (trophy or medal).
- Confirm that all the required paperwork for each division has been completed, signed, and returned to the Tournament Secretary.
- Be responsible for the areas surrounding their ring. In the interest of safety, judges should make sure that spectators allow ample room for competition. Determining "ample room" will be decided by the Center Judge.
- **Judges should not hesitate to ask a tournament official for a ruling concerning a difficult or unique problem.**

## 14.7 – Judging Ethics & Etiquette

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At any NMAA tournament, demonstrations of prejudice, lack of attentiveness in the ring, etc., shall be cause for warnings and reprimands from higher officials and the National Tournament Director.

Cell phones, headphones, and other electronic devices used for the purpose of communication such as sending and receiving text messages, receiving calls, etc. is strictly prohibited for judges as well as scorekeepers and form leaders while actively conducting their ring. Failure to follow this rule will subject the offender to immediate disciplinary action. Judges should be focused entirely on the competitors in their ring. Any such warnings shall become part of the judge's permanent record.

Three warnings within a 12-month period shall bring a mandatory suspension from all official activities including: judging, participating in tournaments, and participating in State or National belt testing events. The duration of the suspension will be determined by the National Tournament Director.

### 14.7.1 – Remaining “Above Reproach”

On occasion, a judge’s integrity is questioned by competitors, spectators, or other judges. The most common grievance is the “appearance of bias.” To help foster a more neutral and unbiased judging panel, judges and tournament officials should consider the following guidelines whenever possible:

- Judges should NOT judge with their spouse.
- Judges should NOT judge their own children (or spouse).
- All three judges should NOT be from the same school.
- Although difficult to avoid, judges should NOT judge their own students. If a judge is incapable of judging their student without showing bias, they should ask to be replaced.

## 15.0 – INJURIES

Every effort has been made to ensure that competing in an NMAA sanctioned tournament is as safe as possible. However, injuries may occur.

**The following guidelines will be applied to all injuries during competition:**

- Competitors who are injured will be asked by the judge to lie down (or remain still).
- Keep the competitor as still as possible, and DO NOT remove the headgear.
- The medical team on site will be called to the ring.
- If there wasn't a blow to the head or face, the competitor's mouthpiece may be removed.
- Until the medic arrives at the ring, every effort will be made to help the competitor stay calm and remain still.

Injured competitors will only be allowed to continue when a certain criterion is met.

**The criteria for continuing competition are as follows:**

- The medical team has determined that the competitor will not be further injured by continuing and has cleared them for competition. The decision of the medical team, the day of the event, is final, and may not be overruled by a parent or instructor.
- If the competitor is 17 years of age or younger, permission to continue is ALSO required by the competitor's parent or guardian. If the parent or guardian is not available, the competitor's instructor must give permission. If the competitor's instructor is not present, the decision made by the medical team will act as either permission or denial to continue in the competition.
- If a health-care professional is not available, ALWAYS err on the side of caution.

**Injuries and Concussions:** ALWAYS err on the side of caution. You are not expected to "diagnose" a concussion, as that is the job of an appropriate health-care professional. If an appropriate health-care professional on-site determines that the athlete HAS NOT suffered a concussion, the athlete may return to competition. If an appropriate health-care professional determines an athlete HAS suffered a concussion, that athlete MAY NOT return to competition that day. No one may "overrule" the health-care professional. This includes parents, competitors, guardians, other judges, and spectators.

## 16.0 – NMAA BYE SYSTEM

The NMAA bye system is to be set up before Self-Defense or Traditional Point Sparring begins.

The NMAA bye system is based on the concept that each ring must achieve a stage at which exactly four competitors are left to spar in the semifinal matches; having an even number of competitors will NOT ensure that a ring will reach this stage.

A bye is considered an "automatic win." Competitors who receive a bye will not have to compete in the first round; as a result, they would automatically move to the next round.

## 16.1 – Procedure for Awarding Byes

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All National Champions (regardless of the year) and State Champions (from last season only) will receive preference in the awarding of byes for Traditional Point Sparring and Weapon Sparring events. For the 2019-2020 Tournament Season, National Champions and 2019 State Champions will receive bye preferences.

The procedure for administering byes will be as follows:

- The Center Judge will calculate/confirm the number of byes needed by using the "bye calculator" located at the bottom of the sparring bracket score sheet.
- The Center Judge will have all the competitors turn around and show their uniform backs to determine who is wearing the appropriate champion uniform to receive a bye preference. You **MUST** be wearing the uniform that day to get the bye preference. Verbal or written confirmation of champion status will not be allowed.
- Only champions who have earned a title in Traditional Point Sparring are eligible to receive a bye preference in Traditional Point Sparring competition. The same rule applies to Weapon Sparring titles in respect to byes in Weapon Sparring competition.
- The byes will be awarded in this order:
  1. National Champions: the most current National Champion receives the first bye. Then, additional byes are awarded in descending order of year.
  2. State Champions: the current State Champions will receive any additional byes. State Champs are only eligible for a bye preference for the competition season immediately following the season in which the title was awarded. State Champions can only receive a bye preference in the state they received their title(s). State Champions do not receive a bye preference at the National Championships. See [6.6.1 – State Champion Privileges](#).
  3. Award any remaining byes needed by a random drawing.
- If there are two or more champions of the same year and status, a random drawing among those tied will be used.

- This process does not guarantee that everyone who is eligible for a bye preference will receive a bye.
- If a competitor receives a bye in the first round and then refuses to spar in the second round, the competitor will forfeit any points.
- A competitor who wishes to change uniform tops for sparring events may do so, provided that the ring is not delayed in any manner. Competitors may not "share" uniform tops.

## 16.2 – “Same School Rule”

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When the Center Judge is pairing the competitors for Traditional Point Sparring or Self-Defense competition, an effort will be made to prevent competitors from the same school from competing against each other in the first round of competition. If competitors receive a bye in the first round, they may face an opponent from the same school the second round. The procedure for determining byes will take precedence over the rule of competitors being separated by school for the first round. The byes cannot be reassigned if this procedure leaves only members from the same school competing against each other in the first round.

This rule does not apply to “Tournament of Champions” competition. See [6.9 – “Tournament of Champions” \(TOC\)](#).

## 16.3 – “Rule of 3” for Sparring Events

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The “Rule of 3” as it refers to Traditional Point Sparring and Weapon Sparring applies when there are ONLY three competitors listed on the sparring bracket.

The “Rule of 3” procedure is as follows:

- The Center Judge awards the bye using the NMAA Bye System.
- Competitor 1 spars Competitor 2.
- The winner spars Competitor 3.
- Then, if applicable, the two defeated competitors will spar for second place. See the two examples below for clarification.

### **Example #1:**

Johnny, Edward, and Chad are sparring.

Johnny receives the bye. Therefore, Edward and Chad spar first.

If Edward defeats Chad, he will then spar Johnny for first place.

If Edward defeats Johnny, Edward will receive first place.

Because Edward defeated both Chad and Johnny, the second-place finisher is undetermined.

Therefore, Chad will spar Johnny for second place.

**Example #2:**

Johnny, Edward, and Chad are sparring.

Johnny receives the bye. Therefore, Edward and Chad spar first.

If Edward defeats Chad, he will then spar Johnny for first place.

If Johnny defeats Edward, Johnny will receive first place and Edward will receive second place.

Because Edward has already defeated Chad, there is no need for a third match.

## 17.0 – TRADITIONAL RING PROCEDURES

### 17.1 – Order of Events

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The host of each tournament will publish the tournament schedule, as provided by their State Tournament Organizer, for that tournament. If the host has a schedule in mind, the host must submit it to and receive approval from the State Tournament Organizer before it's published to the general public.

The order of competition within a traditional division will be:

- Traditional Forms.
- Traditional Weapons.
- Traditional Point Sparring / Self-Defense.
- Weapon Sparring.

**Extreme competition** is held at a different time than the traditional events. The specific competition times vary from state to state. Students are encouraged to check published times or procure an event schedule.

### 17.2 – Preparing for Competition

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The following procedures are indicative of how each ring is to be run at every NMAA tournament.

#### 17.2.1 – Collect Registration Forms & Confirm Events

As competitors enter the ring, the Center Judge should collect the registration forms and verbally confirm the events each competitor is competing in. Then, the Center Judge should re-count the number of competitors and the number of registration forms to ensure these numbers match.

#### 17.2.2 – Warm-up

The Center Judge should NOT physically “warm-up” the competitors in any manner. Instead, if time allows, the judges should allow a few minutes for the competitors to stretch and warm-up on their own.



### 17.2.3 – Prepare the Scoresheets

The Center Judge should randomly list all the competitors on the scoresheet and mark-out the events that each competitor is NOT competing in. The Center Judge may choose to delegate this task to a Corner Judge or the Scorekeeper. However, the Center Judge is ultimately responsible for accuracy.

### 17.2.4 – Introduction of the Judges

To officially start the division, the competitors will line up and bow-in to the assigned judges.

The Center Judge will introduce the judges to the competitors and announce who is Judge A, who is Judge B, and what area of form competition each judge is scoring.

From the Center Judge's point of view, Judge A will be on the left-hand side of the Center Judge and Judge B will be on the Center Judge's right side. See [17.4.5 – Judges: Areas of Concentration](#).

### 17.2.5 – Announce the Line-up

As a courtesy, the Center Judge should also take a moment to share the line-up order to the Competitors. As each competitor is called up to perform, the Center Judge should announce who is "on deck."

## 17.3 – Concluding the Ring

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After all events have finished and the Center Judge has reviewed and confirmed the results, the ring should be concluded in this order:

### 17.3.1 – Announce Awards

Each judge should shake hands with every competitor and congratulate them as they hand out the awards.

When a competitor is announced, they should take one step back, turn right, and proceed to the area immediately in front of Judge A (the judge to the left of the Center Judge); from there, they will recognize each judge by making eye contact and bowing. Each judge should extend their hand to congratulate each competitor.

#### **NOTE:**

If there is a Victory Podium available at the tournament, the Center Judge will bow out the competitors and lead them to the podium; the awards will be announced and received there. See [below](#).

### 17.3.2 – Bow Out

To officially end the division, the competitors will **line up and bow out** to the assigned judges.

### 17.3.3 – Feedback to Competitors

Many times, competitors will ask their judges, “what can I do to improve my score?” or “what did I do wrong in my form that earned me a 9.5 from you?”

Although judges have positive intentions and want to help students improve, giving feedback can be very disrespectful to the school owner or instructor who taught them their material.

Therefore, it is imperative that judges refrain from giving this type of feedback to competitors they judge.

The best answers to give competitors are:

- “Compared to the other competitors in your ring today, I believe your form was a [score].”
- “That is a great question! The best person to ask how to improve your form would be your instructor.”
- “I’m sorry, but out of respect for your instructor, judges are discouraged from giving feedback to the competitors they judge.”

### 17.3.4 – Turn-in Results

The Center Judge, who is solely responsible for the ring, should double check paperwork and have it returned to the Tournament Secretary immediately after finishing the ring.

## 17.4 – Judging Traditional Forms

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### 17.4.1 – Admissible Competition Forms for Color Belts

Color belts that participate in the form portion of the competition will demonstrate the form selected by their instructor. For integrity reasons, instructors should not have color belt students demonstrate a form that would be considered below their current ability level. However, competitors will not be questioned by the judges regarding the appropriateness of their competition form. There will not be any special consideration given regarding any student’s belt color and the form they choose to compete with (neither higher scores for a higher-level form nor lower scores for a lower level form). The students will be judged according to their performance in comparison to the others in their division that day.

#### ***In Regular Divisions:***

- Color belts **MUST** use a Form Leader.

- Color belts can ONLY perform with the FIRST half of their chosen form. However, **if a competitor chooses to compete with either Shimsan 1 or Shimsan 2, they MUST perform the entire form to receive a full score.**

### ***In Competitive Divisions:***

- Color belts MAY have help from the Center Judge during the execution of their form. However, if assistance is offered, the Center Judge MUST give a score of 9.0. See 17.4.13 – Incomplete Form.
- Corner Judges will NOT score higher or lower based on whether the student needs help or not.
- Color belts may compete with EITHER the first half of their form or the second half of their form to receive a full score. Color belts MAY NOT compete with the entire form. However, **if a competitor chooses to compete with either Shimsan 1 or Shimsan 2, they MUST perform the entire form to receive a full score.**

### **NOTE:**

**Starting with the 2020-2021 Tournament Season, ALL color belts competing in the Competitive Division MUST perform their ENTIRE color belt form.**

## 17.4.2 – Admissible Competition Forms for Black Belts

Black Belts may not compete with a form designated for a rank higher than their current rank.

Black Belts are allowed to compete with Shimsan 6 if they qualify under the “6-Month Rule.”

## 17.4.3 – “6-Month Rule”

Black Belts must perform their entire form without help with one exception:

- As a part of the “6-Month Rule”: Black belts who have received a new rank may **EITHER**:
  - ✓ Perform ONLY the first half of their new form for a maximum period of six months. After which, they are required to demonstrate their entire form. Performing the first half of the form does **NOT** apply to “TOP TEN” competition at the State Finals or the “Tournament of Champions.” **OR...**
  - ✓ Perform the whole form of their previous rank for a maximum period of six months. After which, they are required to demonstrate the entire form for their current rank.
- It is assumed that if black belts perform only half of their form during the tournament season, or perform their previous form, they are within the six-month grace period. Therefore, black belts who meet these criteria will NOT be penalized or disqualified for not demonstrating their entire, current form **EXCEPT** in “TOP TEN” competition. See 6.9 – “Tournament of Champions” (TOC).
- If the integrity of the “6-Month Rule” is in question, the Center Judge should bring it to the attention of the Tournament Director/Organizer immediately. The Tournament Director/Organizer, after consulting with the student and/or the student’s instructor, will determine whether the competitor should receive a full score or a score for an “incomplete form” or not. If the competitor has already

been scored, there will not be an immediate ruling. Instead, the Tournament Director/Organizer will consult with the student's instructor to remedy the situation and prevent future infractions.

## 17.4.4 – Competing for a State or National Title

Students competing in the Black Belt division for a title at the State TOP TEN or National "TOP TEN" may NOT compete with half of a form. They must compete with the entire form. See 6.0 – CHAMPION PROGRAMS.

## 17.4.5 – Judges: Areas of Concentration

Scoring of Traditional Forms is divided into three judging aspects. Judge A, Judge B, and Center Judge. Each judge is scoring a different aspect of the competitor's presentation. An important aspect of judging forms is not letting personal preferences concerning techniques influence scoring. It is not feasible to expect every member of the NMAA to do every technique the same. Differences in body styles, age, and other criteria can make a difference in how an Instructor may teach a student certain technique. Form judges must base their score on the overall look and effectiveness of the techniques. **The best "rule of thumb" is to watch the competitor as a judge and not as an instructor.** When seated, Judge A will be on the left-hand side of the Center Judge and Judge B will be on the Center Judge's right-hand side.

## 17.4.6 – Corner Judge A

Corner Judge A will grade stances and kicks only.

For **stances**, Judge A should look for:

- A strong base with correct length and width.
- Correct weight distribution.
- A level center of gravity while moving (head height in stance transition should remain the same).
- Proper position of feet during the stance.

For **kicks**, Judge A should look for:

- Proper execution (chamber, execution, rechamber, and return).
- Balance (pivot, hand and body position, solid sole, eye contact, control of height, control of power).
- Speed.
- Power.
- Proper joint setup.
- Height of kick is NOT a major consideration.

Judge A **will only judge the techniques that are shown** and will not make point deductions for moves left out, executing the wrong type of kick, or an incomplete form. Those areas are the responsibility of the Center Judge.

## 17.4.7 – Corner Judge B

Corner Judge B will grade hand techniques only.

For **hand techniques**, Judge B should look for:

- Proper execution (starting position, direction, rotation, ending position, and eye contact).
- Speed.
- Power.
- Proper joint setup.

Judge B **will only judge the techniques that are shown** and will not make point deductions for moves left out, executing the wrong type of block or strike, or an incomplete form. Those areas are the responsibility of the Center Judge.

## 17.4.8 – The Center Judge

The Center Judge will grade the overall form presentation.

In addition to the criteria assigned to Judge A and Judge B, the Center Judge will also consider the following aspects of the form:

- Memory.
- Rhythm and timing of the form.
- Competitor's attitude & enthusiasm.

The quality of technique is being judged by the Corner Judges; hence, the Center Judge can focus on the showmanship of the presentation.

## 17.4.9 – Scorekeeper

The Scorekeeper plays an important role in the overall running of a ring. While this position is not considered to be a judge, it has responsibilities and obligations that must be followed. The Center Judge should select a student who is in a traditional Taekwondo uniform to fill the role of the Scorekeeper. Street clothes are not considered appropriate attire for this position.

The Scorekeeper should:

- Make sure that their duties are understood and ask the Center Judge for any clarifications, if necessary.
- Write legibly and completely fill in any and all scores given by the Center Judge.
- Repeat the score back to the Center Judge in a loud, clear voice.
- Make every effort to get the Center Judge's attention if a score or time issue arises at any point during the competition.

- Pay complete attention to the ring in which they are assigned.
- Refrain from cheering for any competitor. Scorekeepers should remain unbiased as if they were one of the three judges.

### 17.4.10 – Determining & Administering a Score

It is important to understand how to determine a competitor's score.

- The first three competitors will complete their form. Then, the judges will determine what score to give each competitor. This allows the judges to establish a "baseline" for the remaining scores in the ring.
- Each judge will give a score ranging from 9.0 through 9.9.
  - ✓ **The score is a comparison score based on the competitors in the ring, and not based upon the excellence of the form itself.**
  - ✓ It is highly possible that the scores from each judge may greatly vary because each judge is scoring a different part of the performance and the scores do not have any relationship to each other.
- There are no boundary restrictions during Traditional Forms competition. Competitors will not be penalized for stepping beyond the ring boundaries, nor will they be penalized for adjusting their position to avoid obstacles, people, or the ring boundaries. Competitors might not be aware that they are free from penalty for stepping beyond the ring boundaries. Therefore, judges may encourage competitors to adjust within the ring. Obstacles that could obstruct a competitor's path might be bags, equipment, spectators, or other students waiting to compete.
- There are no specific time restrictions during Traditional Forms competition. When forms are described and taught, the written material has a suggested time frame in which the form should be performed. This suggested time frame is there for the purpose of helping students understand the speed and flow of the form. It is not included as judging criteria to be used for tournament competition.

### 17.4.11 – Scoring Range & Meaning

The meaning of the scores:

- 9.9 = considered among the best of the group.
- 9.6-9.8 = better than the average of the group.
- 9.5 = the group average.
- 9.2-9.4 = below the group average.
- 9.1 = MUST be given by all three judges for a completed form in **color belt** competition on second attempt (black belt competitors are NOT allowed a second attempt).

- 9.0 = Incomplete (only to be given by the Center Judge for an incomplete form on first attempt. If the form is incomplete on the second attempt [color belts only], all three judges MUST give this score).

An incomplete form on the first attempt will merit a score of 9.0 from the Center Judge ONLY.

An incomplete form on the first attempt MAY merit a score of 9.2-9.9 from the Corner Judges.

An incomplete form on the second attempt will receive a score of 9.0 from all three judges.

All color belts are allowed two chances to complete their form. The highest score attainable on the second attempt is a 9.1 (given by all three judges).

Black belts are NOT given the opportunity of a second attempt.

If any black belt competitors fail to complete the form, they should receive a score of 9.0 from the Center Judge for an incomplete form. Corner Judges should always formulate their score based on the quality of technique shown in comparison to the other competitors that day in that ring.

## 17.4.12 – The “Rule of 3”

When judging a ring with only three competitors, the “Rule of 3” comes into play.

The “Rule of 3” states that in the event that there are only three competitors competing in a “form demonstration” event, **each judge shall only give one score of 9.9, one score of 9.8, and one score of 9.7.** The scores should reflect who each judge deemed as first, second, or third place in the respective event.

**Exception:** In a Weapon Form event, if a competitor drops the weapon during their performance, their score must be reduced by one-tenth of a point from all judges. In this case, the judges will FIRST place the competitors in order by which form they felt was best, second best, and third best. THEN, after designating who they believe should get the 9.9, 9.8, and 9.7, the judges will deduct the one-tenth point from the competitor who dropped the weapon.

**Example:** If the first-place competitor was the one who dropped the weapon, a score of  $9.9 - 0.1 = 9.8$  will be given. Since the second-place form received a 9.8 and the third-place form received a 9.7, a tie will be inevitable.

**Example #2:** If the third-place competitor was the one who dropped the weapon, a score of  $9.7 - 0.1 = 9.6$  will be given. Since the first-place form received a 9.9 and the second-place form received a 9.8, no further action is required.

## 17.4.13 – Incomplete Form

An incomplete form is defined as a competitor leaving out an entire segment or stopping any time during the form and not finishing. If competitors leave out a technique or two, turn the wrong direction, or perform an incorrect technique, this would NOT be classified as an incomplete form. The Center Judge will deduct points based on presentation and memorization; the Corner Judges should not deduct for these types of mistake.

The Incomplete form ruling does NOT apply to Regular divisions as memorization is not required.

In Competitive divisions, the Center Judge may assist competitors in completing their form through verbal cues and possible physical demonstrations if the competitors are unable to complete their form or gets "stuck." This is done solely to help the self-esteem of the competitors by giving them the opportunity to finish their form in front of their peers and audience. The Center Judge must then score the form as if it were incomplete (with the score of 9.0). The Corner Judges do NOT deduct for this assistance. The Corner Judges only judge the techniques demonstrated.

**Example:** A competitor demonstrating Shimsan 3 leaves out both high blocks and does round kicks instead of side kicks but has correct technique throughout the form. The Center Judge may make score deductions for the wrong techniques or for omitting techniques, while Judge A and Judge B give scores that reflect the quality of the techniques demonstrated when compared to the other competitors.

### 17.4.14 – Resolving Ties

When two or more competitors have the same score for first, second, or third place, there is a tie in the division.

- Ties will be resolved via a "tiebreaker" or form "run-off" rather than in a conference.
- The tied competitors will be asked to do their form again, in the order in which they were originally called up.
- **Tied competitors must do the same form they did originally.**
- All three judges will now be judging the entire form overall rather than their original assignments.
- All ties will be decided by the judges pointing to the best form instead of giving scores.
- If there is a tie for more than one placement, the judges will decide the highest place first.

The following method is used for determining the winner of the "tiebreaker":

1. After all the tied competitors (for that place) have completed their form, they will line up facing the judges.
2. On the command of the Center Judge, all judges will point at the competitor they felt did the best.
3. If at least two judges pick the same person, that person wins and will receive that place in the competition.
4. If more than one place is at stake, the judges will immediately decide the next best form using the same procedure, and so on, until all the placements have been fulfilled.

If all three judges point to different competitors, those three competitors will step forward.

1. Next, the two competitors on the Center Judge's left will take one more step forward. The Center Judge will now ask the judges to pick the better form from those two choices.
2. This winner will stay, the loser will step back. Now the third competitor steps forward even with the winner of the last selection. Again, the Center Judge will now ask the judges to pick the better form from these two choices. The person who receives two or more votes is the winner of the "tiebreaker."



3. If more than one place is at stake, those competitors eliminated by the original vote would now be brought back into a straight line, and the judges will point to the one they felt deserved the next place. This procedure will be used until all places have been determined.

**Each judge MUST remain consistent with their best choice when deciding ties.** If a judge points to "Competitor A" in the initial voting, that judge must continue to vote for "Competitor A" in all subsequent voting until "Competitor A" places or is eliminated.

**Example #1:** There is a two-way tie for first place and a two-way tie for third place. The Center Judge will have the two competitors who tied for first place demonstrate their forms again and the judges will decide (through the voting process) who receives first place and second place. Next, the two competitors who tied for third place will perform and the judges will vote for who finished in third place.

**Example #2:** Sue, Mary, Jane, and Betty tied for first place. All four competitors will demonstrate their form a second time. Afterwards, all four competitors will line up in front of the judges and, at the direction of the Center Judge, the judges will point to the competitor they felt earned first place. If each judge points to a different person, one competitor is eliminated from the first-place voting (for this illustration, Mary was eliminated). Once the first place has been decided via the above voting procedure, the second-place finisher needs to be determined. To do this, Mary would be brought back into the line-up (as she is eligible to earn second place). This procedure would be used if there are four or more tied for first or second place; those eliminated in the deciding for one place will be brought back for the next place.

**Example #3:** There is a three-way tie for first place. The top finishers are Ellen, Sally, and Jane. After the three competitors have completed their form a second time, the Center Judge commands the judges to point to the competitor they feel should win first place for having the best form. Judge Brown votes for Ellen. The other judges each vote for Sally and Jane respectively. The Center Judge calls Ellen and Sally to step forward and again commands the judges to vote. Judge Brown MUST vote for Ellen again. If Ellen wins the vote and proceeds to go against Jane, Judge Brown MUST again vote for Ellen.

## 17.5 – Judging Traditional Weapons

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### 17.5.1 – Weapons Inspection

The Center Judge will call for each weapons competitor to come forward and present the weapon intended for use in that competition.

The weapon presented will be inspected to ensure that:

- Based on the competitor's rank, it is an eligible weapon to compete with.
- The weapon is an appropriate style for the competitor's rank and competition event.
- The weapon is the appropriate size for the competitor.
- The weapon does not violate any weapon adornment restrictions.

- The weapon is in good repair and safe to use in competition.

If, in the opinion of the judges, it is determined that the weapon has been altered before the competition takes place, the competitor will be allowed to replace the weapon.

If it is determined after the student competes that the weapon was altered after the initial weapons inspection, the competitor will be disqualified.

Presenting an appropriate weapon for the weapons inspection, then exchanging it for an incorrect size, type or style after the inspection process is completed, will result in a disqualification of the competitor.

If a weapon breaks during competition, it is not the fault of the judge who performed the weapons check. The weapon is the responsibility of the competitor.

### 17.5.2 – Admissible Competition Weapon Forms for Color Belts

Color belt students must confer with their instructor concerning the weapon they will use in competition.

In Traditional Weapons, color belts MAY ONLY compete with one of the following:

- Single or Double Escrima.
- Single or Double Chucks.
- Long Staff.
- Kamas (must use two).

Color belts may use bamboo or performance weapons for Traditional Weapons competition.

Color belt students will demonstrate a "freestyle" routine of their own creation. This routine cannot exceed 30 seconds. Their **entire** freestyle form cannot be all, or part of, a black belt weapons form. Competing with large sections of a traditional black belt form is not considered an "original creation" and therefore cannot be used. The routine must be approved by the competitor's instructor prior to competition; therefore, it is vital that color belt students consult their instructor as to the presentation of the routine and the use of the weapon.

### 17.5.3 – Admissible Competition Weapon Forms for Black Belts

Currently, in Traditional Weapons, black belts MAY ONLY compete with one of the following weapon forms:

- Single Chuck Form.
- Long Staff Form.
- Kama Form.
- Sword Form.
- Level 2 Sword Form (Second Degrees and higher)

### 17.5.4 – Judging Criteria for Color Belt Weapon Forms

In color belt Traditional Weapons competition, Judge A, Judge B, and the Center Judge will score the entire performance of the form rather than one specified aspect. Also, "incomplete forms" do not exist in color belt weapon forms since it is a "freestyle" form.

Color belt "freestyle" forms will be judged on the following criteria:

- Overall control of the weapon: deductions for drops, mishandling, etc.
- Difficulty: more difficult maneuvers deserve more recognition.
- Originality: is the competitor being creative.
- Presentation: is the display exciting and fun.
- Practical application: is the competitor striking with purpose.
- Stances, timing, and rhythm: non-weapon attributes and technique.

The above criteria are not ranked in any specific order; they are intended as a guide for the judges to compare on presentation to another.

### 17.5.5 – Judging Criteria for Black Belt Weapon Forms

In black belt Traditional Weapons competition, Judge A, Judge B, and the Center Judge will score the entire performance of the form rather than one specified aspect. **The Center Judge has the additional judging criteria of the completeness of the form. The Center Judge is the only judge that will consider completeness and make necessary deductions.**

All judges will consider the following criteria:

- Accurate, effective strikes (as they relate to the nine angles of striking).
- Timing: the coordination of hand and foot movements.
- Fluid handling of the weapon: smooth exchanges and transitions from one move to the next.
- Equal precision of the left and right sides of the body: a balance of quality technique from one side to the other.
- Consistency between the first half of the form and the second half: equal speed and direction of the weapon during both halves.
- Proper stances.
- The attitude of the competitor.

The above criteria are not ranked in any specific order; they are intended as a guide for the judges to compare on presentation to another.

### 17.5.6 – Determining & Administering a Score

The scoring procedure for Traditional Weapons is the same as in Traditional Forms competition. See [17.4.10 – Determining & Administering a Score](#).

### 17.5.7 – Scoring Range & Meaning

The 'range of scores' is the same as in Traditional Forms competition. The judges have a score ranging from 9.0 to 9.9. See [17.4.11 – Scoring Range & Meaning](#).

### 17.5.8 – Additional Scoring Rules for Traditional Weapons Competition

There are no incomplete forms in color belt Traditional Weapons since it is a "freestyle" form.

If a color belt's entire weapon form is all, or a section of, a black belt weapon form, the competitor will receive a 9.0 from the Center Judge only. Judge A and Judge B will give scores based on the criteria given.

There will be no penalty for color belt weapon forms that are less than 30 seconds.

No part of the presentation that exceeds 30 seconds will be considered when the judges give scores, even if a weapon is dropped.

During a black belt's weapon form, deductions for moves that were left out will be the sole responsibility of the Center Judge.

### 17.5.9 – Dropping or Breaking a Weapon

- In Traditional Weapons, there is an **automatic one-tenth point deduction** from each judge's score for **dropping** the weapon(s).
- Losing control of the weapon and catching it before it touches the ground is NOT considered a dropped weapon.
- In Traditional Weapons, if the competitor fails to pick up the weapon entirely, an **additional one-tenth point will be deducted** from each judge's score.

**Example:** A Black Belt Adult is competing with the Sword and their scabbard falls to the floor. If the black belt competitor does not retrieve the scabbard before the Center Judge announces "Bah-roh", all three judges will deduct an additional one-tenth point.

- Competitors are 'active in competition' from the time they are bowed in until the "Bah-roh" command has been given ("Bah-roh" means 'return to ready stance position'). Any weapon drops between those two actions will impact the score given by the judges.
- When using the Sword, the scabbard is considered a part of the weapon and therefore falls under the same criteria for dropped weapons.

- There will be a **one-tenth point deduction** from each judge's score if a competitor **intentionally breaks** the weapon during their performance. If, from no fault of their own, a competitor's weapon **unintentionally breaks**, there will be NO penalty.

If a weapon should break, the competitor will be given a maximum of 30 seconds to replace the weapon from their own gear or borrow one from another competitor. Once the student has replaced the weapon, the form will be continued from the point where the weapon broke.

- If for any reason the damaged weapon is not replaced, the competitor will receive a score of 9.0 from the Center Judge and a one-tenth point deduction from the Corner Judges.
- See 17.4.12 – The "Rule of 3".

## 18.0 – JUDGING SELF-DEFENSE (BULLY/STRANGER)

### 18.1 – Admissible Content

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- The bracket for Self-Defense competition will be set up using the NMAA bye system. Once the bracket has been completed, announce the competitors who received the byes. See 16.0 – NMAA BYE SYSTEM.
- The Self-Defense sequences for Karate Kids and Little Dragons will be performed towards the Center Judge as the Center Judge is the “attacker.”
- After the competitors bow in, the Center Judge assigns one competitor to be “red” and the other competitor to be “black.”
- The competitor on the Center Judge's right will always be red and go first.
- Before attacking, the Center Judge will turn and face the “red competitor” so that they are parallel to the Scorekeeper. After the “red competitor” has finished, the Center Judge will face the opposite direction and engage the “black competitor.”
- After each competitor has completed the **first** self-defense sequence, the Center Judge will call “break” and reposition to face the Scorekeeper.
- When prompted by the Center Judge, the judges will use sparring flags and hand signals to point to the competitor they believe performed the best self-defense sequence. The competitor who received at least two of the three votes from the judges will win the round and receive one-point.
- For the second round, the competitors must perform the **second** self-defense sequence.
- This will continue until one competitor scores two-points and is declared the winner of the match.
- Before advancing to the next round, the winners of each match will confirm their name with the Scorekeeper to ensure that the proper competitor is credited with the win. It is the Center Judge's responsibility to ensure the correct competitor advances.

#### 18.1.1 – Judging Criteria for Self-Defense

All self-defense sequences will be judged by the following criteria. The judges will check each of the criteria, moving down the list until they see a significant difference between the competitors. This determines the winner of each self-defense sequence.

**The following criteria are in order of importance:**

1. The quality of the basic techniques: stances, blocks, kicks, etc. As mentioned earlier about forms, memorization is not the organization's sole objective. A student that has “great” technique but leaves

out a move (or does an incorrect move) should not lose to a student that does the self-defense "correctly," but has only "fair" technique.

2. If both are even, the judges will look at power; which competitor uses the stronger techniques.
3. Next, the judges will look at the realistic performance of the self-defense (facial expression, voice projection, and intensity).
4. If they are still tied, the competitor with the better competitive attitude should win.

### *18.1.2 – Tiebreaker Round*

- Self-defense can be performed in any order (Bully Self-defense and Stranger Danger Self-defense).
- If there is a tie and a tiebreaker is necessary, each competitor can elect to use either the Bully defense or the Stranger defense.

## 19.0 – JUDGING TRADITIONAL POINT SPARRING

### 19.1 – Safety Gear Inspection

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Judges MUST perform a **safety gear check** to ensure that approved sparring gear is being used. Other inspections include:

- **Groin protector check:** should be performed BEFORE the Traditional Point Sparring or Weapon Sparring event begins. See [12.4 – Traditional Point Sparring Competition](#). See [12.5 – Weapon Sparring Competition](#).
- **Mouthpiece check:** should be performed BEFORE every match.
- **Eye protection check:** should be performed BEFORE every Weapon Sparring match.

#### 19.1.1 – Groin Protector Check Procedure

All male competitors must wear a protective cup prior to beginning sparring competition. **Judges shall, immediately prior to beginning sparring rounds in which male competitors are involved, conduct a discrete groin protector check.** One of the adult male judges shall gather the competitors competing in either Traditional Sparring or Weapon Sparring together, forming a tight circle, and ask each person to tap on their protective groin cup so that the judge can hear the knocking sound. No judge should perform this task for the competitor. If all three judges are female, they should ask an adult male black belt judge nearby to do the groin protector check. Any male competitor found not to be wearing a protective groin cup shall be instructed to put one on. Any male competitor who is not wearing a protective groin cup at the time they are called to spar will forfeit the match.

### 19.2 – Positioning of the Judges

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Each judge is assigned a position in the ring to allow the best view for judging Traditional Point Sparring or Self-Defense competition.

The Corner Judges should take a position in the opposite corners from the Center Judge, creating a triangle. All three judges should try to maintain this triangle throughout each match. Therefore, as the competitors move around the ring, so do the judges.

The Center Judge's primary position is directly facing the Scorekeeper and Timekeeper; this is to ensure that the Scorekeeper and Timekeeper receive, understand, and write down all instructions and scores. When a call has been determined, the Center Judge will command the Scorekeeper to award the point(s) to the designated competitor. To confirm: The Scorekeeper should verbally repeat the call back to the Center Judge and record the awarded points on the scoresheet.



## 19.3 – Calling Points for Sparring

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All judges have equal authority to call points or penalties.

When calling for points or warnings, each judge has a single, yet equal vote. The Center Judge does not have authority to “overrule” the other judges in the ring.

Judges are not allowed to alter, add, or modify any NMAA tournament rules.

It is imperative that judges understand the importance of calling a point for a student that is obviously trying not to hit a less talented student.

**Example:** If “Competitor A” does a spin kick just over the head of “Competitor B” and it’s obvious to the judges that “Competitor A” did so in the spirit of safety, and “Competitor B” did not evade, attempt a block, or otherwise demonstrate that the kick was seen, the judges should award two points to “Competitor A” just as though the kick had actually hit the head of “Competitor B.” This type of ‘judgment call’ is not open to interpretation by other competitors, judges, spectators, or seniors. It is put in the rules to remind judges that the most important aspect of judging is competitor safety.

### 19.3.1 – Hand Signals & Flag Maneuvers

Corner Judges and Center Judges use signals to indicate calls during a match. The Center Judge will point to the proper competitor rather than raising a flag. Corner Judges will use the flags as an indicator.

The calls are:

- **Point** - Raise the correct flag color (and point the flag toward the competitor who scored) and the number of fingers corresponding to the number of points scored. This means the judge either saw a technique “come close to” or “make contact with” a legal target area.
- **No Point** - Cross both forearms downward. This means the judge saw a technique but did not feel that it qualified as a point due to reasons such as, but not limited to:
  - ✓ The technique was not close enough to the opponent.
  - ✓ The technique was blocked by the opponent.
  - ✓ The technique was not a proper technique (weak or poorly thrown).
  - ✓ The technique was executed when the competitor was out-of-bounds.
- **No See** - Hands cover the eyes. This means the judge either did not see the technique in question or was not able to judge whether the technique came close to or touched a legal target area.
- **Warning** - Wave the correct flag color down low. This means the judge saw the competitor do something that was illegal.

**The difference between “No Point” and “No See”:** A judge must **SEE** (not just hear contact or assume contact) the technique in question. If judges are not sure that a technique scored, they will call “no see.”

Any judge that calls "no see" removes them from the decision. Judges who call "no point" when they should have called "no see" could prevent a competitor from receiving a legitimate point.

## 19.3.2 – Point Calling Procedure

If a point is seen (without a warning), the following actions will occur:

- One or more of the three assigned judges should clearly call out "Break!" to stop the action.
- Upon direction from the Center Judge, each judge will indicate one of the three calls; "point," "no point," or "no see."
- The Center Judge and the Corner Judges are required to show their vote at the same time.
- Each judge has one vote with all the votes carrying equal weight.
- When indicating a point for either color, the Corner Judge should raise the appropriate flag, indicate the number of points awarded, **and** point in the direction of the competitor for whom they are calling. **If** the judge accidentally raises the wrong flag, but points to the correct competitor, the judge may change the flag to correct the call; this helps safeguard against honest mistakes by allowing the proper competitor to receive the call.
- Points will be awarded based a majority vote of judges who saw the techniques.
- If two or three judges score different points for the same competitor, the highest common score called by the judges will be awarded.

**Example #1:** Two judges call "no see" and one judge calls "1-point Black." In this case, a call of "no see" eliminates two of the judges from the scoring vote. Therefore, the remaining judge, who called "1-point Black," is acknowledged as the majority and Black is awarded 1 point.

**Example #2:** The first judge calls "no see," the second judge calls "1-point Red," and the third judge calls "no point." In this case, there is no majority. Therefore, no points would be awarded.

**Example #3:** The first judge calls "1-point Red," the second judge calls "1-point Red," and the third judge calls "2 points Red." The highest common score is "1-point Red." Therefore, Red is awarded 1 point.

**Example #4:** The first judge calls "1-point Red," the second judge calls "2 points Red" and the third judge calls "3 points Red." At least two judges agree on 2 points Red or higher. Therefore, Red is awarded 2 points.

## 19.4 – "Out of Bounds" for Sparring

During Traditional Point Sparring, competitors are considered "out of bounds" when any part of the body is touching the floor beyond the ring boundary. Judges should tap the floor with their flag if they see competitors "out of bounds." Tapping the floor brings awareness to all parties involved that one or both competitors are not permitted to score.

The following details apply to the "out of bounds" rule:

- Competitors who have both feet "out of bounds" cannot score.
- Competitors who are "out of bounds" can still be scored upon.
- If the judges determine there are no safety hazards, competitors may continue to spar while one opponent is "out of bounds."
- If a competitor is "out of bounds," their "in-bounds" opponent is not required to grant them access back into the ring unless the judges call, "break!"
- If one foot is "in-bounds" and one foot "out of bounds," competitors can only score with the foot that is "out of bounds." By picking up the "out of bounds" foot, they are now back in the ring.
- Competitors cannot score with a jump kick if it's initiated with both feet "out of bounds." However, a #3 jump kick can score if the "out of bounds" foot is the one that initiates the elevation for the kick (and the other foot was already "in-bounds"); once the "out of bounds" foot lifts off the floor, the base foot, which is "in-bounds," may score.
- Competitors can score on an "out of bounds" opponent with a jump kick if it's initiated inside the ring and the scoring occurs while both feet are still in the air.
- "Out of bounds" competitors may NOT score with a hand technique while one or both feet are "out of bounds."

## 19.5 – Warnings

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The safety of all competitors is the primary concern of all tournament judges. Due to this fact, the calling of warnings is a very important aspect of a judge's responsibilities. There are three different types of warnings: Non-contact, Contact, and Excessive Contact (or Unsportsmanlike Conduct).

### 19.5.1 – Warning Call Procedure

The following procedures and guidelines are used to call warnings:

- If a judge sees an illegal technique or illegal action, that judge will call "Break" to stop the action.
- Judges who saw the warning will immediately wave the flag towards the ground; the flag color should match the color that represents the offending competitor.
- The Center Judge will look at the Timekeeper and say, "Stop Time!"
- A discussion will then take place about what was seen and whether any of the other judges saw the same illegal action. The purpose of this discussion is informational in nature only. One judge should never attempt to persuade the other judges to change their minds.
- The Center Judge should then call for verification of the warning (like calling for verification of points). The signals used to verify a warning are as follows:

- ✓ **Verify the warning** - Wave the matching colored flag of the offender towards the ground. This indicates that the judge saw the action and agrees that it was illegal.
- ✓ **Disagree with the warning** - Cross the arms low. This indicates that the judge saw the action but did not agree that it was illegal.
- ✓ **No See** - Hands cover the eyes. This indicates that the judge did not see the action and cannot agree or disagree with the call.
- The results of this call are handled like calling for points. The majority indicates the final call. It is important to remember that two calls of "No See" do not negate a warning or a point. "No See" calls are treated as if the judge wasn't there at the time and the majority of what is remaining indicates the final call, even if the majority is only one judge.
- A competitor cannot be issued a warning and be awarded a point at the same time.
- Judges should make every effort to make sure the competitors and spectators understand any discussions that occur.

**Example:** During the action, one judge saw Red [competitor] punch towards Black's [competitor] face and two judges saw Red kick towards Black's head. After break was called, the judge that saw the punch waves the red flag towards the ground. The Center Judge sees the call for a warning and stops time so the judges can discuss what was witnessed. After the discussion, the Center Judge asks for official verification.

During the verification process:

- **Case #1:** One judge's vote is for a "warning" and the other two vote "no warning" by crossing their arms low. The warning is not verified. The Center Judge calls for points. One judge calls "no point" and the other two call "2 points Red." Result: no warning for Red; and Red is awarded 2 points.
- **Case #2:** One judge votes "warning" and two judges vote "no see." Result: warning for Red; and Red can NOT receive points for the kick to the head.

## 19.5.2 – Non-Contact Warnings

Competitors may be issued non-contact warnings. Actions that warrant non-contact warnings include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Directing a technique towards an illegal target area (this would include fakes or feints).
- Executing a technique towards an illegal target area (without making contact).
- Running out of the ring to avoid being scored upon.
- Purposely falling to avoid being scored upon.
- Delaying the match (slow returning to mark, slow getting up, etc.).
- Receiving coaching.
- Grabbing their opponent.

Non-contact warnings will generate the following penalties:

- For the first infraction in the match, the competitor will receive a warning only.
- For each additional infraction in the match, a penalty point will be awarded to the competitor's opponent.

### 19.5.3 – Contact Warnings

Contact warning rules are for the safety of all competitors in their respective divisions. Safety equipment is effective for preventing minor cuts and bruises from contact made with controlled techniques. It will not protect against full-power attacks. Contact warnings are merited when contact is made to an illegal area.

Examples would be:

- Contact made with any hand techniques to the head.
- Contact to any illegal target area with a legal technique.
- The technique used was illegal and made contact.
- Contact is excessive in nature.
- Takedowns of any kind.
- Throwing the opponent.
- Body checking, pushing, or shoving the opponent.

Contact warnings will generate the following penalties:

- The first infraction in the match will result in a penalty point awarded to the competitor's opponent.
- The second infraction in the match will result in the automatic disqualification of the competitor.
- All contact warnings will result in a point awarded to the defender. This includes unintentional contact that does not fall under the 'NO FAULT' rule.

### 19.5.4 – “No Fault” Rule

Incidental contact to an illegal target area is categorized by the name, the 'no-fault' rule. If competitors execute techniques that are intended for a legal target area, but due to actions outside of their control, strike (or comes close to) an illegal target area, they will not be penalized. An important factor in determining if the 'no-fault' rule should be exercised is if the competitor recognized what was about to happen and tried to further control the technique. Judges will use their experience, along with the attitudes of the competitors, a guideline when using the 'no-fault' rule.

**Example #1:** A competitor executes a side kick towards his opponent's ribs. The opponent does a spin hook kick at the same time and is consequently kicked in the back. This would result in a 'no-fault' call.

**Example #2:** A competitor executes a reverse punch towards his opponent's chest. The opponent ducks down and is hit in the face; or the opponent blocks the punch upwards, resulting in contact to the face. This would result in a 'no-fault' call.

### 19.5.5 – Excessive Contact Warning

Excessive contact warnings are in the sole discretion of the Center Judge and may result in a penalty point or disqualification. Remember that the purpose of this rule is to protect the competitors, physically and mentally. It may result in disqualification if excessive contact was due to negligent lack of control. A competitor disqualified for excessive contact can advance and participate in the third-place match. Excessive contact due to malice will result in an unsportsmanlike disqualification, and the competitor is done for the day in that event.

### 19.5.6 – Disqualification

Competitors who are penalized with two contact warnings during a sparring match will automatically be disqualified regardless of if they are ahead in points. Competitors who are disqualified in the semifinal match can advance to the third-place match. Competitors who are disqualified in the finals will be awarded second place. The only exception is disqualification due to unsportsmanlike conduct.

#### **Notes:**

- Competitors do NOT have to commit the same contact warning twice to be automatically disqualified. For example: a round kick to the leg with contact plus a punch to the head with contact during a single match will result in an automatic disqualification.
- Contact warnings, or warnings of any kind, do NOT carry over to the next match or the next event.

### 19.5.7 – Unsportsmanlike Conduct Warnings

Unsportsmanlike Conduct Warnings are in the sole discretion of the Center Judge. Unsportsmanlike conduct warnings may, in the sole discretion of the Center Judge, result in a penalty point and/or disqualification. At the discretion of the Center Judge, a competitor may be given an unsportsmanlike conduct warning if the competitor's family, friends, or fans engage in such conduct. If a competitor is disqualified for unsportsmanlike conduct after placements are awarded, the competitor's place will be forfeited. Other competitors will not move up in place if this occurs. At the discretion of the National Tournament Director, unsportsmanlike conduct may result in the loss of all or part of a competitor's accumulated "TOP TEN" points. The competitor could also be barred from future tournaments. The offender will receive official, written notification from the National Tournament Director.

## 20.0 – JUDGING WEAPON SPARRING

### 20.1 – Safety Gear Inspection

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The Safety Gear Inspection for Weapon Sparring is the same those used in Traditional Point Sparring. See [12.5.1 – Required Safety Equipment](#). This includes a weapon inspection. See [10.2 – Weapon Specifications](#).

### 20.2 – Positioning of the Judges

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The Positioning of the Judges for Weapon Sparring is the same those used in Traditional Point Sparring. See [19.2 – Positioning of the Judges](#).

### 20.3 – Calling Points for Weapon Sparring

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The Calling Points for Weapon Sparring is the same those used in Traditional Point Sparring. See [19.3 – Calling Points for Sparring](#).

### 20.4 – “Out of Bounds” for Weapon Sparring

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The criteria for an “Out of Bounds” call in Weapon Sparring follows the same guidelines as hand techniques in Traditional Point Sparring. See [19.4 – “Out of Bounds” for Sparring](#).

### 20.5 – Procedure for Dropped Weapons

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- When a weapon is dropped, the Center Judge will look at the Timekeeper and say, "Stop Time!"
- A discussion will then take place about when the drop occurred. There are two options:
  - ✓ If the drop occurred during the active part of the match, the competitor who dropped the weapon can NOT be awarded points for scoring techniques.
  - ✓ If the drop occurred after "break" was called, the competitor who dropped the weapon may be awarded points for scoring techniques.

- Award one point for the drop to the opponent.
- Call for points, if necessary.
- Time resumes when Center Judge restarts the match.

**Example #1:** Red [competitor] performs a scoring strike, but during the follow through, drops his weapon. This is considered an active part of the match. Therefore, Black is awarded a point for Red's dropped weapon. Red **cannot** be awarded points for the scoring technique.

**Example #2:** Red [competitor] performs a scoring strike and "break" is called. As Red moves back to his starting position, he drops his weapon. This would be an example of the "inactive" part of the match. A point is awarded to Black for Red's dropped weapon. Red **can** receive points for his scoring technique.

## 20.6 – Warnings & Penalty Points

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The safety of all competitors is the primary concern of all tournament judges. Due to this fact, the calling of warnings is a very important aspect of a judge's responsibilities. There are three different types of warnings: Non-contact, Contact, and Excessive Contact (or Unsportsmanlike Conduct).

### 20.6.1 – Procedures for Calling a Warning

The procedures for calling warnings in Weapon Sparring are the same those used in Traditional Point Sparring. See [19.5.1 – Warning Call Procedure](#).

### 20.6.2 – Non-Contact Warnings

Competitors may be issued non-contact warnings. Actions that warrant non-contact warnings include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Having more than three points of contact on the ground. See [12.5.6 – "Three Points of Contact"](#).
- Running out of the ring to avoid being scored upon.
- Purposely falling to avoid being scored upon.
- Delaying the match (slow returning to mark, slow getting up, etc.).
- Receiving coaching. See [13.1 – "No Coaching" Rule](#).
- Grabbing the opponent.

Non-contact warnings will generate the following penalties:

- For the first infraction in the match, the competitor will receive a warning only.
- For each additional infraction in the match, a penalty point will be awarded to the competitor's opponent.



### 20.6.3 – Contact Warnings

Contact warning rules are for the safety of all competitors in their respective divisions. Safety equipment is effective for preventing minor cuts and bruises from contact made with controlled techniques. It will not protect against full-power attacks. Contact warnings are merited when contact is made to an illegal area.

Examples would be:

- Strikes to illegal targets.
- Stabs to illegal targets.
- Takedowns of any kind.
- Throwing the opponent.
- Body checking, pushing, or shoving the opponent.

Contact warnings will generate the following penalties:

- The first infraction in the match will result in a penalty point awarded to the competitor's opponent.
- The second infraction in the match will result in the automatic disqualification of the competitor.

### 20.6.4 – Excessive Contact Warning

Excessive Contact Warnings follow the same procedures as Traditional Point Sparring Procedures. See [19.5.5 – Excessive Contact Warning](#).

**Notes:**

- Competitors do NOT have to commit two of the same contact warnings to be automatically disqualified. For example: A weapon strike to the throat plus pushing the opponent to the ground during a single match will result in an automatic disqualification.
- Contact warnings, or warnings of any kind, do NOT carry over to the next match or the next event.

## 21.0 – JUDGING EXTREME EVENTS

### 21.1 – Extreme Forms: Composition Guidelines

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**The following guidelines are in place for Extreme competition (Forms and Weapons):**

- Competitors in these divisions must demonstrate a form or weapon form that reflects the essence and values of Extreme competition.
- At least 50% of the form must be original material.  
**Exception:** Students performing the Extreme Forms and Extreme Weapon Forms taught in the NMAA curriculum will not be penalized for not having original material.
- The entire presentation must be no longer than two minutes from the judge's command to start time until the competitor finishes their performance.
- There is no limit to the number of "tricks" allowed.
- All types of kicks and combinations are allowed if the instructor of the competitor approves of the safety aspect of the presentation. Safety is the number one concern.
- No props are allowed.
- Blindfolds are considered a prop and are **NOT** allowed.

### 21.2 – Approved Extreme Weapons

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All Traditional Weapons size requirements apply in Extreme Weapons competition. Approved Extreme competition weapons include the following:

- Single or Double Escrima.
- Single or Double Chucks.
- Long Staff.
- Double Long Staff.
- Kamas (must use two).
- Sword (black belts ONLY).

ALL students may use any weapon listed above for Extreme Weapons competition **EXCEPT** the Sword. The Sword is a weapon reserved for black belts only.

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## 21.3 – Extreme Weapons: Composition Guidelines

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In addition to the rules for Extreme Forms competition, the following additions apply to the Extreme Weapons competition:

- **“Releases” or “throws”** of the weapon **are allowed** in Extreme Weapons competition.
- During Extreme competition, the Sword’s Scabbard may be set aside if it is done in a way that is not disrespectful to the weapon. However, competitors are reminded that the Scabbard **MUST** be picked up and the Sword re-sheathed **BEFORE** the Center Judge announces, “Ba-Roh.”

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## 21.4 – Extreme Competition Procedures

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Extreme Forms and Extreme Weapons competition procedures will parallel Traditional Forms and Traditional Weapons competition procedures with the addition of the Scorekeeper timing each competitor’s performance.

- Before the start of the ring, the judges will perform a weapons inspection.
- The Scorekeeper will start the time when the Center Judge says, “Your time begins now.”
- The Scorekeeper will inform the Center Judge when the two-minute time limit has expired.

### 21.4.1 – Competitor Bow in Procedures

1. Competitors will enter the ring and run to the center of the ring for their traditional bow-in when their name is called.
2. Upon the completion of the traditional bow-in, the Center Judge will say, “Your time begins now.” The Scorekeeper will start the clock (two-minute time limit).
3. This signifies the beginning of the competitor’s form. Now that the clock is running, additional adjustments or bows may be added at the competitor’s discretion.

### 21.4.2 – Determining & Administering Scores

Scores for Extreme Forms and Extreme Weapons competitions will be awarded in the same manner as Traditional Forms and Traditional Weapons competitions and will have consistent meanings. See [17.4.10 – Determining & Administering a Score](#).

## 21.4.3 – Judging Criteria for Extreme Forms & Weapons

- All three judges will score the entire form.
- The **first aspect** of judging should be the quality of Taekwondo technique and the handling of the weapon (strikes).
- The **second aspect** of judging will be the following five categories and should be considered with equal weight:
  - ✓ Difficulty
  - ✓ Creativity
  - ✓ Presentation
  - ✓ Attitude
  - ✓ Control of the weapon is added to the judging criteria for Extreme Weapons.
- The **third aspect** a judge will consider are the "tricks" and "variety of tricks" presented in the form. This would include how competitors add martial art techniques to the "trick" they are demonstrating.

**Example #1:** "Competitor A," who is equal in presenting an "EXTREME" form that is creative and has strong, difficult, and precise techniques may not score as high as "Competitor B" who adds a variety of "tricks" to that same type of form.

**Example #2:** "Competitor A," who has strong, crisp, and precise techniques, may score higher than "Competitor B," whose Taekwondo techniques are not crisp and strong but has many difficult "tricks." **(Remember that the single most important factor in all form presentations is the quality of the techniques demonstrated.)**

**Example #3:** Both "Competitor A" and "Competitor B" are equal in quality of techniques and creativity. However, "Competitor A," who only executes tumbling passes, may not score as high as "Competitor B" who performs passes with martial arts kicking "tricks."

**Example #4:** If "Competitor A" and "Competitor B" are equal in everything including "tricks," the competitor that demonstrates a stronger ability to integrate the "tricks" into martial arts combinations may score higher.

- **Case A:** Both competitors do aerial cartwheels but "Competitor A" performs it in combination with a butterfly kick and a hook kick and ends with a punch in a front stance. "Competitor A" demonstrated a higher level of difficulty by integrating the acrobatic move into a martial arts combination.
- **Case B:** Performing a jump split kick, back tuck, pop front kick, turn punch is more difficult than just a back tuck and landing in a sparring stance.

#### 21.4.4 – Penalties & Disqualifications

- Competitors who **exceed the time limit will be disqualified** and no score will be given.
- Competitors who compete with a **form that is not 50% original will be disqualified** and no score will be given.
- When a disqualification occurs, the judge will say: **“Thank you for your performance today but because you . . . , no score will be given.”**
- Competitors who are disqualified cannot receive first, second, or third place.

#### 21.4.5 – Dropping Weapons in Extreme Competition

- Extreme Weapons competition procedure for dropped weapons and broken weapons mirrors that of the Traditional Weapons procedure for dropped weapons or broken weapons. See 12.5.8 – Dropped or Broken Weapons.

## 22.0 – SPECIAL ABILITIES: RULE ADJUSTMENTS

### 22.1 – Traditional Forms & Weapons Competition

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Traditional Forms and Traditional Weapons competition for Special Abilities will follow the same procedures as the standard divisions with one exception; **all the judges will watch the entire form quality and the 'intent of the technique' rather than the original assignments.** See [12.1 – Traditional Forms Competition](#).

Explanation:

- Some competitors cannot perform kicks and stances; therefore, it is not reasonable to expect a judge, who is assigned to judge kicks and stances, to give a fair score.
- Some competitors cannot perform hand techniques; therefore, it is not reasonable to expect a judge, who is assigned to judge blocks and strikes, to give a fair score.
- By allowing the judges to evaluate all aspects of the form and weapon performances, they can fairly judge and score the competition.
- The **'intent of the technique'**: due to severe balance issues, some competitors might be able to only lift their leg a few inches off the ground (representing a kick in their form). In this case, the "intent" of the technique was to kick. Therefore, judges should grant the competitor some latitude on the technical aspects and focus more on 'what the competitor was meaning to accomplish.'

### 22.2 – Traditional Point Sparring Competition

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The standard Traditional Point Sparring rules will apply for Special-A competitors (those with Autism). See [19.0 – JUDGING TRADITIONAL POINT SPARRING](#).

Sparring competition for Special-C (cognitive) and Special-P (physical) divisions will run the same as the standard divisions with one exception: **all scoring techniques will be awarded 1-point.**

Explanation:

- Competitors confined to a wheelchair do not have the opportunity to score a 2- or 3-point technique; therefore, making all scoring techniques 1 point would increase the level of fairness.
- Competitors with limited mobility could also be put at an unfair disadvantage. For example: a competitor with crutches might have significant issues with balance and kicking versus a competitor with excellent balance and mobility.

This is not meant to discourage competitors who are capable of head level or jumping type kicks; they are still allowed and encouraged to use those kicks. They simply will only be awarded 1-point. All legal techniques and legal target areas remain the same.

## 23.0 – LITTLE DRAGONS: RULE ADJUSTMENTS

Because Little Dragons do not actually compete, the ring staff can be different from the normal tournament guidelines. Only one judge and one Form Leader are required in each ring.

- Every effort will be made to ensure that Little Dragon judges have experience working with this age group.
- Form Leaders will assist in navigating forms and self-defense; they will be available if the competitors need help with performing their material. Form Leaders are required to know the material being performed in the ring they are assisting.
- Form Leaders may be junior instructors, younger trainee instructor, or specifically trained color belts who know the material.
- Form Leaders will be used to assist those participants who have indicated they “need help” on their registration form. Form Leaders will also help competitors who “go blank” or are having trouble remembering their form or self-defense sequences.
- Form Leaders will perform each form in such a manner that the Little Dragon will be able to follow along.
- Form Leaders may also verbally lead the students. They should use the proper names for each technique and include a descriptive term that will remind the child how to do the technique.

## 23.1 – Traditional Forms & Self-Defense

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The decision for what material Little Dragons will participate with will be left up to their instructor and should be indicated on their registration form. Little Dragons may compete with only one self-defense sequence, or they may use both the Bully self-defense and the Stranger Danger self-defense sequences.

## 23.2 – Judging Criteria & Scoring Format

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Since this is an ‘**introduction to competition**,’ scoring for forms, weapons, self-defense, sparring, and weapon sparring will be significantly altered from other divisions.

The judging of Little Dragons will be as follows:

- Little Dragons will not receive numerical scores. Instead, the judge will make a positive comment about the performance of each student. This scoring method is used for both forms and weapons performances.

- For Self-Defense competition, the judge will call up two Little Dragons at a time and have them face each other. The judge will direct the action and the Form Leader will assist by being the "attacker" for each self-defense sequence. The judge will not award points; they will comment positively about the effort and techniques demonstrated.
- For Traditional Point Sparring and Weapon Sparring competitions, points will not be issued. Instead, when the judge sees something special to comment on, they should call "break" and make a positive comment about the move. Traditional Point Sparring and Weapon Sparring rounds for Little Dragons will be **ONE minute each**.
- Each Little Dragon will do **two-rounds** of Traditional Point Sparring (or Self-Defense for white-yellow belts) and/or Weapon Sparring. If there is an odd number of Little Dragons, one of them will do three rounds. The judge should pick a good, positive reason for having that Little Dragon perform an additional time.

## 23.3 – Categories for Little Dragon Awards

Once the Little Dragons have completed their demonstrations, the judge will award each participant with one of the following (suggested) categories:

- Best Kicks.
- Strongest Punches.
- Loudest Yells.
- Amazing Power.
- Best Black Belt Attitude.
- Fantastic Focus.
- Best Memory.
- Fastest Moves.
- Awesome Blocks.
- Most Energy.

States may decide to change these categories at their discretion, but it should be done with the input of those instructors who work with Little Dragons on a regular basis.

Additional awards are given to those Little Dragons who participate in **each** of the following events: Traditional Weapons, Extreme Forms, and Extreme Weapons. Awards are very similar to the forms and sparring categories listed above. The following categories are can also be used:

- Incredible Control.
- Super Speed.
- Powerful Weapon Handling.
- Terrific Twirling.
- Cool Creativity.
- Best Warrior Spirit.
- Amazing Combos.
- Strongest Strikes/Cuts.
- Weapon Super Star.
- Extreme Combos.





# Official Tournament Rules

2019

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